People in Jail and Prison in 2024

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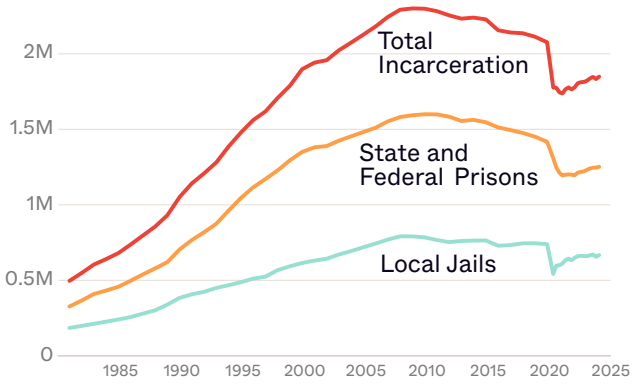
SUMMARY

In the more than four years since the coronavirus pandemic started, the number of people incarcerated in U.S. prisons and local jails has remained near 1.8 million—an 11 percent reduction from 2019. Nationally, decarceration has stalled: the total number of people incarcerated in the United States increased 2 percent between fall 2022 and spring 2024. This increase was especially steep in some states and localities. Still, the number of people incarcerated in the United States was 1.8 million in spring 2024, nearly 250,000 fewer than in 2019.

At the local and state levels, some jurisdictions saw more rapid changes than the national totals, indicating divergent trends. For example, between fall 2022 and spring 2024, the net reduction in people incarcerated in local jails and state prisons in California was 6,400, nearly offsetting the 6,500 person increase in Texas. During the same period, 40 states increased the number of people in their prisons, and some saw substantial growth: In Maine and South Dakota, the number of people in prison increased by more than 10 percent, and in 18 other states, the number of people in prison increased by more than 5 percent. Six states had more people in prison in spring 2024 than they had at the end of 2019: Arkansas, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota, with Alaska and Iowa very close to pre-pandemic levels. Many of those states are building new prisons. In contrast, 18 states had 15 percent fewer people in prison in spring 2024 than in 2019. More recently, between fall 2022 and spring 2024, while 10 states reduced the number of people in prison, only one state, Hawaii, reduced the number of people in prison by more than 5 percent.

FIGURE 1.

Overview of incarcerated populations



Vera

In spring 2024, the number of people in jail nationally was down 10 percent from 2019 and had held relatively stable since fall 2022. While some states have seen a full rebound to pre-pandemic levels, many remain lower. Between fall 2022 and spring 2024, the number of people in jail in rural counties increased 2.2 percent. The number of people incarcerated in urban county jails was down 1.7 percent.

The age distribution of incarcerated people has shifted faster than aging trends in the overall population, with a large and increasing share of people behind bars ages 55 and older and a shrinking number of people who are under 25.

Federal policies have not helped to reduce incarceration. From 2022 to 2024, the U.S. Marshals Service detained population decreased by 9 percent and the federal prison population by 2 percent. However, these decreases were counterbalanced by the continued criminalization of immigration and detention of people with immigration cases in civil custody: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which often detains people in local jails, increased its detention population by more than 21 percent between late 2022 and spring 2024.

One clear impact of the last four years is that many states that had relatively lower prison incarceration rates to start, especially those clustered in the Northeast, found ways to further reduce incarceration. And major cities and their suburbs—notable four years ago for their lower use of incarceration—continue to jail people at the lowest rates. In contrast, many states appear to be intent on pushing high incarceration rates even higher, building new prisons and writing new laws designed to limit parole.

TABLE 1.

Overview of incarcerated populations in the United States and changes by region

				Difference		Percent change	
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2024	2022-2024	2019-2024	2022-2024
Total Incarceration	**2,093,364**	**1,812,132**	**1,841,698**	**-251,666**	**29,566**	**-12.0**	**1.6**
Prisons	**1,434,662**	**1,218,406**	**1,252,551**	**-182,111**	**34,145**	**-12.7**	**2.8**
Total Jails	**739,617**	**662,444**	**659,791**	**-79,826**	**-2,653**	**-10.8**	**-0.4**
rural	162,391	146,766	148,517	-13,874	1,751	-8.5	1.2
small/mid	254,500	229,219	226,923	-27,577	-2,296	-10.8	-1.0
suburban	144,153	128,094	133,509	-10,644	5,415	-7.4	4.2
urban	178,573	158,364	150,842	-27,731	-7,522	-15.5	-4.7

Introduction

The unprecedented decrease in incarceration witnessed from 2019 to 2020 has been sustained into 2024, but only in some places and only for some groups of people. New data compiled by the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) shows that, by spring 2024, incarceration had returned to 2019 levels in many states like Georgia and Texas; others, like California, New York, and Virginia, remain down by a fifth compared to 2019. Rural counties across the board have also returned to their high incarceration rates, a trend that has only worsened over the course of the last decade.

The capacity to incarcerate in the United States continues to be increased by federal, state, and local governments spending billions of dollars on new jails and prisons, shifting to new methods to finance construction.[1] Vera's research shows that, in the face of high inflation, high interest rates, supply chain disruptions, and opposition to investment in prison-related securities, some states are opting to pay for costly prison construction projects directly out of their general funds—a decision that directs funds away from other infrastructure and public service needs, like education.[2] As described in this report, this austerity agenda of carceral infrastructure first, care last, was aided and abetted by the use of

federal funding under the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act.[3]

While Vera has not collected comprehensive, recent data on incarcerated people by age and race, analysis of government data through 2022 indicates increasing numbers of older people in jails and prisons and increasing racial disparities as places reduce the number of people in jail.

Rapid increases in the detention of immigrants by federal agencies between fall 2023 and spring 2024 were met and exceeded by a growing number of states attempting to criminalize immigration under state law.[4] Most notably, Texas has deployed the national guard and set up a separate criminal legal system—holding hearings before judges who have often been called back from retirement, using tent jails for pre-arraignment detention, and repurposing state prison units for pretrial incarceration.[5] While still at a relatively small scale, this is a troubling development worth attention.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

To provide the public with timely information on how jail and prison populations are changing, Vera collected data for every quarter (spring, midyear, fall, and year-end) from 2020 to 2023 and for the first quarter of 2024. To compare population numbers against pre-pandemic baselines, Vera collected population data for midyear and year-end 2019 from jails and prisons.[6] Vera also collected data on people civilly detained by ICE who were held in local jails, private prisons, and dedicated immigration detention facilities.[7] Vera combined this data with jurisdiction-level jail and prison data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau. This report focuses on population changes through March 2024. (Additional data is available in a data file online and from Vera's Incarceration Trends website).[8]

This report presents information in multiple forms, starting with counts of the number of people incarcerated on a given day. The report also provides incarceration rates: the number of people incarcerated divided by the total population (or a specific population category) and multiplied by 100,000. Incarceration rates allow for

more direct comparison across states, jurisdictions, or regions with different sized populations.

States and localities rarely publish data on incarceration by race, ethnicity, or gender. Due to this lack of transparency, this report focuses on overall incarceration numbers. However, researchers have long noted the racist criminalization of Black and other nonwhite people—especially Latino people—in the United States, and the available federal government statistics indicate wide racial disparities in jail and prison incarceration.[9]

LOCKING UP OLDER PEOPLE

Incarceration rates for older adults in the United States are high and rising. People over the age of 55 comprise a substantial and growing share of people in jail and prison, even as the number of young adults incarcerated declines to levels not seen in decades. Exacerbated by the widespread use of long sentences that ensure "death by incarceration," this problem has received more widespread critical attention in recent years.[10] Efforts to encourage expanded compassionate release, medical parole, or elder parole are one way to let older adults out of prison—another could involve clemency (also known as pardons). The growing share of older adults being incarcerated in local jails also presents an opportunity for policy intervention.[11] Relying on data from the U.S. Census and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, this section provides details on recent trends in incarceration by age group across local jails and state and federal prisons.

In 2022, there were 254,900 people behind bars aged 55 and up, 54 percent more than the 166,000 people incarcerated under 25 (see figure 2). Although the trend of decreasing youth incarceration and increasing incarceration of older people is visible beginning in the 2000s, the divergence has accelerated since 2020.

First, the long run: Across the United States, between 2000 and 2019, the total incarceration rate for people ages 65 and higher more than doubled, from 45 people per 100,000 to 114. During that time, the incarceration rate of people under the age of 18—both those processed through the adult criminal legal system and those managed by the juvenile system—decreased precipitously. Many states that prosecute, detain, and incarcerate youth under 18 in the adult criminal legal system changed their laws to process them through the juvenile system.[12] The incarceration of young people under the age of 18 in adult facilities declined 84 percent between 2000 and 2019, from 264 to 43 per 100,000.[13] During the same time, young people ages 13 to 17 in juvenile justice facilities declined 66 percent from 434 to 144 per 100,000.[14] The incarceration rate for 18- to 64-year-olds declined 5 percent from 1,113 to 1,054 per 100,000 residents. Youth incarceration rates declined more than the overall rate; senior citizen incarceration, however, increased more than the overall rate.

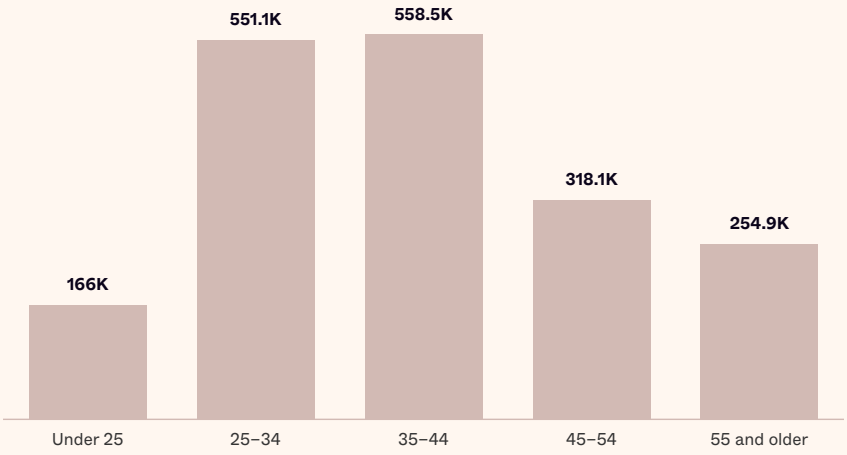
Second, more recently in the wake of 2020, these trends accelerated. While every other age group's incarceration rate declined between 2019 and 2022, the incarceration rate for people ages 65 and up increased 7 percent, from 114 to 122 per 100,000. (The number of incarcerated people ages 65 and up actually increased 16 percent, but because the overall number of people ages 65 and up in the community increased 9 percent—as the majority of people born in the United States postwar baby boom entered retirement age—the rate increased more slowly.)

Between 2019 and 2022, the incarceration rate for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 in adult facilities declined by 30 percent (from 612 to 425 per 100,000), and the rate for 25- to 34-year-olds decreased by 21 percent (from 1,537 to 1,210 per 100,000). In contrast, people ages 55 to 64 saw a much smaller 5 percent decline in the total incarceration rate between 2019 and 2022 (from 458 to 437 per 100,000). After these changes, incarceration rates in 2022 for people ages 55 to 64 were higher than the rate among 16- to 24-year-olds.

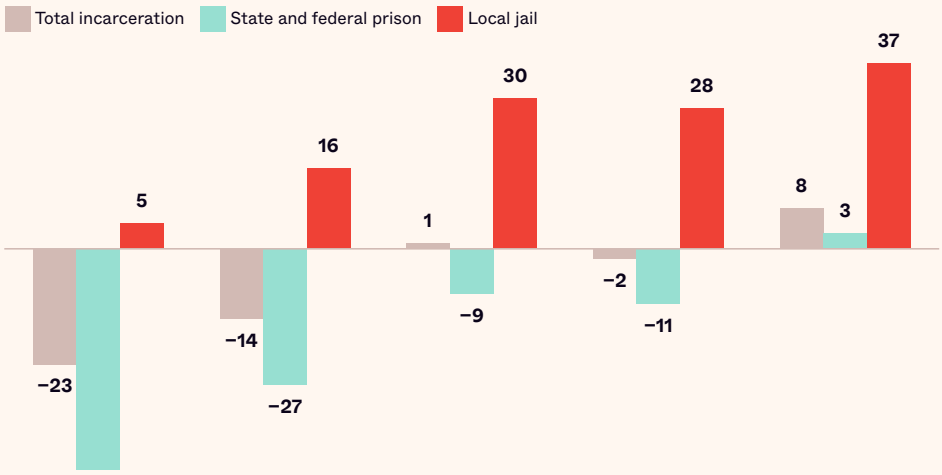
FIGURE 2.

People in jail and prison by age group

Number of people in local jails and state and federal prisons in 2022



Percentage change between mid 2020 and mid 2022



As a point of comparison, the incarceration rate for people ages 65 and over surpasses the incarceration rate for people of all ages in countries like Canada, France, and Italy.[15] Many of the older people incarcerated in the United States are in state or federal prisons instead of local jails, a larger share compared to younger age groups: in 2022, 22 percent of incarcerated people over 55 were held in local jails, compared

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Survey of Jails, 2020 and 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, PC03, "Group quarters population in correctional facilities for adults by sex by age," (2020), https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDHC2020.PCO3; U.S. Census Bureau, S2602, "Characteristics of the group quarters population by group quarters type (3 types)," (2022), https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2602. Data for young people in residential juvenile justice facilities for 2022 was not available at time of publication. However, including 2021 data for this population would add 24,200 to the under 25 category; see Charles Puzzanchera, "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement," National Center for Juvenile Justice and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2023, https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/.

to 64 percent of incarcerated people under 25. Nonetheless, as figure 2 shows, older people were the fastest growing share of people incarcerated in local jails between 2020 and 2022. Amidst a pandemic and a housing affordability crisis, police, prosecutors, and judges are incarcerating more and more older adults.

OVERVIEW OF DATA AND METHODS

Vera's national prison statistics are based on data from 50 states and the Bureau of Prisons. For 2023 and 2024, Vera obtained jail data from jurisdictions in every state in the United States—44 states and Washington, DC. (Six states do not have locally operated jails; people detained there are included in state prison statistics). Vera researchers derived jail statistics for 1,621 jail jurisdictions at some point in 2023 and 1,180 in 2024. These include all county jails in 19 states and a sample of jails in the remaining states. Vera researchers used these counts to estimate the national total. The jails in Vera's sample in 2024 held 65 percent of people incarcerated in jails in 2019, the last time the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported information for all jails in the United States.[16] Vera's estimation methods result in numbers quite similar to the BJS annual survey of jails: BJS released their estimate of the number of people in jail at midyear 2023 in June 2024, and their estimate was 0.27 percent different from Vera's estimate for that point.[17]

To document trends in the building and closing of prisons, Vera reviewed media reports from all 50 states—corroborating findings with legislative and budget documents. Vera researchers also monitored news reporting across all 44 states with local jail systems for information on the approval status, size, location, and costs of jail construction and expansion projects; Vera collated this information into a national dataset covering the years from 2002 to 2022, which is publicly available online.[18]

Jail population counts in this report are estimates of the number of people in the custody of the local jail, not the number of people in the local jail's jurisdiction. They, therefore, include people held on

a contract basis for other jails, state prisons systems, and federal agencies like ICE and the U.S. Marshals. (See the methodology for definitions of these terms and a description of Vera's methods.)

Prison population counts in this report are estimates of the number of people under the jurisdiction of state and federal prison systems and, thus, include people held in private prisons or local jails on a contract basis, as well as people held in work-release and medical facilities who are not free to leave and are still serving a prison sentence. Following the BJS definitions, prison jurisdiction counts do not include people held for other authorities.

Generally, Vera obtained data from local jails' and state corrections departments' official websites or from third parties that have been collecting data directly from jails. In instances in which this data was not available online, Vera requested the information from local jails or state corrections agencies by telephone or through public information requests.

Incarcerated Population Counts

Jails: Nationally, between fall 2022 and spring 2024, the number of people held in local jails fluctuated around the same level of just over 660,000 people. This is a 10 percent decrease, or 75,900 fewer people in jail compared to midyear 2019. In contrast, it is a 121,100 person increase from midyear 2020. (See figure 3.)

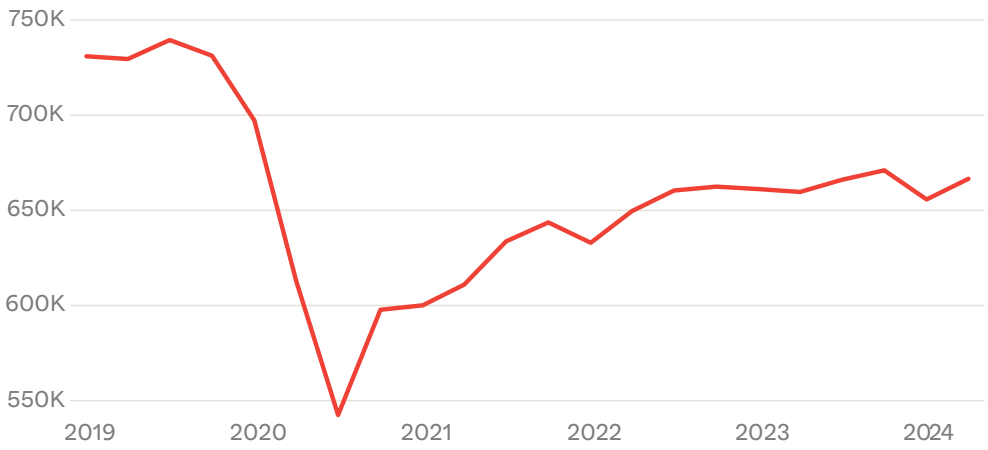
Jails in rural counties are the closest to pre-pandemic levels of incarceration.

Jails in rural counties are the closest to pre-pandemic levels of incarceration and increased from 146,900 people to 150,100 people in jail, a 2.2 percent increase, between fall 2022 and spring 2024. Jails in suburban counties around the largest metropolitan areas increased 2.3 percent during this same period.

FIGURE 3.

People in jail, 2019 to 2024

In spring 2024, there were 75,900 fewer people in jail compared to midyear 2019 and 121,100 more compared to midyear 2020.



Urban counties have had the most sustained reductions in the wake of 2020 and reduced the number of people in jail by 2.2 percent between 2022 and 2024. (See table 1.)

Prisons: Between fall 2022 and spring 2024, the number of people incarcerated in state and federal prisons increased by 34,100, or 2.8 percent, to 1,252,600 people. Compared to the end of 2019, this is a 12.7 percent reduction in the number of people in prisons.

Prison populations increased across all regions during that 18-month period, but this growth was particularly rapid in the South (up 5 percent). The Midwest saw an increase of 3.6 percent, and the Northeast increased 3.4 percent. However, prison populations in the West (up by 0.2 percent) increased much more slowly. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) population decreased 1.7 percent. (See table 3).

STATE TOTALS

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia have comprehensive enough jail and prison data to estimate and calculate total incarceration counts for state prisons and local jails.

From 2019 to 2024, most states with available data exhibited declines in both jail and prison incarceration—at similar rates. There was one state in which jail incarceration declined at a significantly faster rate than prison incarceration: from 2019 to 2024, the number of people in Wisconsin's local jails decreased by 23 percent compared to a 3 percent decrease in the number of people in state prisons.

For the four states where jail and prison trajectories diverged between 2019 and 2024, Vera observed declining prison populations accompanied by increasing or constant jail populations. This is consistent with rebounding jail populations in the years since the coronavirus pandemic. For example, as the number of people in Georgia prisons dropped by 8 percent, its jail population increased by nearly 5 percent. In Maryland and Texas, the number of people in jail stayed relatively constant as the number of people in prison decreased by 13 percent and 5 percent, respectively. In the vast majority of states where Vera has enough data for clear estimates, however, jail populations have not rebounded to 2019 levels.

Looking at a more recent period, from fall 2022 to spring 2024, reveals an emerging shift in these trends. During this time, 11 states reduced the number of people in jail, but nine of these cases were accompanied by growing numbers of people in prison. For example, from fall 2022 to spring 2024, the number of people held in Wisconsin's local jails declined by 4 percent; during this same period, the number of people in state prisons increased by 10 percent. In several other states, like Colorado, Florida, Indiana, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, and West Virginia, jail incarceration also decreased as prison incarceration increased.

In some cases, policies and practices that blur the line between prison and jail incarceration can make it difficult to disaggregate trends in total incarceration. For example, states like Kentucky and Louisiana hold a large number of people serving state prison sentences in local jails on a contract basis. At the end of 2022, about half of people sentenced under the jurisdiction of these states' departments of corrections were incarcerated in local jails.[19] At that time, one-third of people sentenced under the Mississippi Department of Corrections were in local jails; similarly, one-quarter

of those under the Utah Department of Corrections and one-fifth of those under the Tennessee Department of Correction were in local jails.[20] In contrast, 25 states had 1 percent or fewer people under the jurisdiction of the state prison system held in local jails on a contract basis, and 14 states had between 1 and 10 percent.

TABLE 2.

Total incarceration by institution, select states 2019-2024

				Difference		Percent change	
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2024	2022-2024	2019-2024	2022-2024
NORTHEAST							
Connecticut total	**12,293**	**10,088**	**10,580**	**-1,713**	**492**	**-13.9**	**4.9**
Massachusetts total	**16,810**	**12,971**	**13,047**	**-3,763**	**76**	**-22.4**	**0.6**
State prisons	8,205	6,193	6,250	-1,955	57	-23.8	0.9
Local jails	9,155	6,917	6,925	-2,230	8	-24.4	0.1
New York total	**61,789**	**47,001**	**49,177**	**-12,612**	**2,176**	**-20.4**	**4.6**
State prisons	44,284	31,099	32,918	-11,366	1,819	-25.7	5.8
Local jails	20,806	15,902	16,259	-4,547	357	-21.9	2.2
Rhode Island total	**2,740**	**2,315**	**2,325**	**-415**	**10**	**-15.1**	**0.4**
Vermont total	**1,608**	**1,360**	**1,374**	**-234**	**14**	**-14.6**	**1**
MIDWEST							
Indiana total	**45,472**	**41,781**	**42,123**	**-3,349**	**342**	**-7.4**	**0.8**
State prisons	27,268	23,257	24,528	-2,740	1,271	-10	5.5
Local jails	20,633	19,682	18,612	-2,021	-1,070	-9.8	-5.4
Ohio total	**72,225**	**60,694**	**61,710**	**-10,515**	**1,016**	**-14.6**	**1.7**
State prisons	49,762	43,737	45,063	-4,699	1,326	-9.4	3
Local jails	21,105	16,957	16,647	-4,458	-310	-21.1	-1.8
Wisconsin total	**35,562**	**31,808**	**33,385**	**-2,177**	**1,577**	**-6.1**	**5**
State prisons	23,956	21,152	23,190	-766	2,038	-3.2	9.6
Local jails	13,212	10,671	10,207	-3,005	-464	-22.7	-4.3
SOUTH							
Delaware total	**5,692**	**4,996**	**4,940**	**-752**	**-56**	**-13.2**	**-1.1**
District of Columbia	**5,867**	**3,874**	**4,352**	**-1,515**	**478**	**-25.8**	**12.3**
Federal prisons	4,049	2,472	2,494	-1,555	22	-38.4	0.9
Local jails	1,818	1,402	1,858	40	456	2.2	32.5
Florida total	**147,487**	**139,462**	**139,558**	**-7,929**	**96**	**-5.4**	**0.1**
State prisons	96,009	84,121	88,031	-7,978	3,910	-8.3	4.6
Local jails	56,610	56,186	52,357	-4,253	-3,829	-7.5	-6.8
Georgia total	**90,287**	**85,857**	**90,719**	**432**	**4,862**	**0.5**	**5.7**
State prisons	55,556	47,997	51,002	-4,554	3,005	-8.2	6.3
Local jails	42,381	42,585	44,443	2,062	1,858	4.9	4.4

Kentucky total	**37,192**	**33,786**	**30,178**	**-7,014**	**-3,608**	**-18.9**	**-10.7**
State prisons	23,436	19,974	19,369	-4,067	-605	-17.4	-3
Local jails	25,424	23,009	20,155	-5,269	-2,854	-20.7	-12.4
Louisiana total	**49,024**	**45,480**	**45,923**	**-3,101**	**443**	**-6.3**	**1**
State prisons	31,609	27,267	28,387	-3,222	1,120	-10.2	4.1
Local jails	34,057	32,206	31,913	-2,144	-293	-6.3	-0.9
Maryland total	**26,886**	**23,464**	**24,484**	**-2,402**	**1,020**	**-8.9**	**4.3**
State prisons	18,486	15,317	16,178	-2,308	861	-12.5	5.6
Local jails	8,632	8,278	8,443	-189	165	-2.2	2
North Carolina total	**53,602**	**48,823**	**51,351**	**-2,251**	**2,528**	**-4.2**	**5.2**
State prisons	34,510	30,264	31,972	-2,538	1,708	-7.4	5.6
Local jails	20,726	18,559	19,379	-1,347	820	-6.5	4.4
Oklahoma total	**36,446**	**33,611**	**32,889**	**-3,557**	**-722**	**-9.8**	**-2.1**
State prisons	25,712	22,871	22,698	-3,014	-173	-11.7	-0.8
Local jails	11,468	10,740	10,191	-1,277	-549	-11.1	-5.1
Tennessee total	**50,064**	**43,587**	**45,212**	**-4,852**	**1,625**	**-9.7**	**3.7**
State prisons	26,539	22,370	23,235	-3,304	865	-12.4	3.9
Local jails	32,220	25,825	26,756	-5,464	931	-17	3.6
Texas total	**217,456**	**205,171**	**211,717**	**-5,739**	**6,546**	**-2.6**	**3.2**
State prisons	158,820	139,053	150,353	-8,467	11,300	-5.3	8.1
Local jails	72,037	76,345	71,649	-388	-4,696	-0.5	-6.2
Virginia total	**57,406**	**43,527**	**45,595**	**-11,811**	**2,068**	**-20.6**	**4.8**
State prisons	36,091	27,052	27,417	-8,674	365	-24	1.3
Local jails	28,478	20,248	21,327	-7,151	1,079	-25.1	5.3
West Virginia total	**10,707**	**8,815**	**8,642**	**-2,065**	**-173**	**-19.3**	**-2**
State prisons	6,800	4,651	4,793	-2,007	142	-29.5	3.1
Local jails	5,176	5,023	4,589	-587	-434	-11.3	-8.6
WEST							
Alaska total	**4,475**	**4,587**	**4,444**	**-31**	**-143**	**-0.7**	**-3.1**
California total	**194,896**	**160,302**	**153,932**	**-40,964**	**-6,370**	**-21**	**-4**
State prisons	125,507	98,039	94,717	-30,790	-3,322	-24.5	-3.4
Local jails	74,915	62,263	59,215	-15,700	-3,048	-21	-4.9
Colorado total	**31,869**	**27,580**	**27,747**	**-4,122**	**167**	**-12.9**	**0.6**
State prisons	19,714	16,743	17,376	-2,338	633	-11.9	3.8
Local jails	13,586	11,079	10,652	-2,934	-427	-21.6	-3.9
Hawaii total	**5,179**	**4,191**	**3,887**	**-1,292**	**-304**	**-24.9**	**-7.3**
New Mexico total	**12,578**	**10,956**	**11,084**	**-1,494**	**128**	**-11.9**	**1.2**
State prisons	6,723	5,414	5,621	-1,102	207	-16.4	3.8
Local jails	6,448	5,542	5,463	-985	-79	-15.3	-1.4
Oregon total	**20,275**	**16,784**	**16,698**	**-3,577**	**-86**	**-17.6**	**-0.5**
State prisons	15,755	12,276	12,056	-3,699	-220	-23.5	-1.8
Local jails	6,029	4,545	4,689	-1,340	144	-22.2	3.2

STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONS

The number of people incarcerated in state and federal prisons in the United States in spring 2024 was 13 percent lower than in 2019—roughly 1,252,600 people, down from around 1,434,700. The decline has been more pronounced in state prisons than federal prisons. State prison populations are down by nearly 13 percent, in contrast to 11 percent for BOP populations. This translates to around 163,000 fewer people in state prisons in 2024 than 2019.

Although most states have fewer people in prison than prior to the pandemic, there are a handful of places in which the number of people in prison has surpassed 2019 levels: Mississippi (up 0.8 percent), Idaho (up 3.5 percent), Nebraska (up 3.5 percent), Montana (up 4.7 percent), Arkansas (up 5.9 percent), and North Dakota (up 7.5 percent).

Post-pandemic changes in prison incarceration vary across regions. In the Northeast, declines have remained particularly pronounced, with the number of people in prison 21 percent lower in 2024 than in 2019. This decline is more than double that of the South, where the number of people in prison is down by 9 percent. In the West and Midwest, prison incarceration has decreased by 20 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

The number of people incarcerated in state and federal prisons in the United States in spring 2024 was 13 percent lower than in 2019.

In recent years states have been incarcerating more people in prison. As was the case from 2021 to 2022, the number of people in prison has continued to increase in every region over the last year and a half, though they have not reached pre-pandemic levels. This growth was particularly rapid in the South (up 4.8 percent from fall 2022). The Midwest saw an increase of 3.6 percent, slightly higher than the Northeast increase of 3.4 percent. However, prison incarceration in the West (up by 0.2 percent) increased much more slowly. The number of people held in BOP facilities decreased by 1.7 percent between fall 2022 and spring 2024. Therefore, although pandemic-era measures have had a lasting impact on prison populations, increases in the last year have offset these changes in certain regions more than others.

From fall 2022 to spring 2024, all but 10 states increased the number of people in prison. Some places saw extremely high increases: Prison incarceration increased 9.6 percent in Wisconsin, 10.2 percent in Maine, and 10.4 percent in South Dakota. (For more information see table 3.)

TABLE 3.

Federal and state prison populations, 2019–2024

				Difference		Percent change	
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2024	2022-2024	2019-2024	2022-2024
Bureau of Prisons	175,116	158,758	156,007	-19,109	-2,751	-10.9	-1.7
NORTHEAST	**138,445**	**105,497**	**109,066**	**-29,379**	**3,569**	**-21.2**	**3.4**
Connecticut	12,293	10,088	10,580	-1,713	492	-13.9	4.9
Maine	2,205	1,652	1,821	-384	169	-17.4	10.2
Massachusetts	8,205	6,193	6,250	-1,955	57	-23.8	0.9
New Hampshire	2,622	2,051	2,144	-478	93	-18.2	4.5
New Jersey	18,613	12,932	12,593	-6,020	-339	-32.3	-2.6
New York	44,284	31,099	32,918	-11,366	1,819	-25.7	5.8
Pennsylvania	45,875	37,807	39,061	-6,814	1,254	-14.9	3.3
Rhode Island	2,740	2,315	2,325	-415	10	-15.1	0.4
Vermont	1,608	1,360	1,374	-234	14	-14.6	1.0
MIDWEST	**244,412**	**209,906**	**217,505**	**-26,907**	**7,599**	**-11.0**	**3.6**
Illinois	38,259	29,577	29,242	-9,017	-335	-23.6	-1.1
Indiana	27,268	23,257	24,528	-2,740	1,271	-10.0	5.5
Iowa	9,662	9,345	9,590	-72	245	-0.7	2.6
Kansas	10,177	8,430	9,161	-1,016	731	-10.0	8.7
Michigan	38,053	32,227	32,969	-5,084	742	-13.4	2.3
Minnesota	9,982	7,848	8,348	-1,634	500	-16.4	6.4
Missouri	26,044	23,608	23,884	-2,160	276	-8.3	1.2
Nebraska	5,651	5,557	5,846	195	289	3.5	5.2
North Dakota	1,794	1,767	1,929	135	162	7.5	9.2
Ohio	49,762	43,737	45,063	-4,699	1,326	-9.4	3.0
South Dakota	3,804	3,401	3,755	-49	354	-1.3	10.4
Wisconsin	23,956	21,152	23,190	-766	2,038	-3.2	9.6

SOUTH	**603,362**	**525,630**	**550,939**	**-52,423**	**25,309**	**-8.7**	**4.8**
Alabama	28,266	26,290	27,208	-1,058	918	-3.7	3.5
Arkansas	17,759	17,432	18,806	1,047	1,374	5.9	7.9
Delaware	5,692	4,996	4,940	-752	-56	-13.2	-1.1
Florida	96,009	84,121	88,031	-7,978	3,910	-8.3	4.6
Georgia	55,556	47,997	51,002	-4,554	3,005	-8.2	6.3
Kentucky	23,436	19,974	19,369	-4,067	-605	-17.4	-3.0
Louisiana	31,609	27,267	28,387	-3,222	1,120	-10.2	4.1
Maryland	18,486	15,317	16,178	-2,308	861	-12.5	5.6
Mississippi	19,469	19,399	19,628	159	229	0.8	1.2
North Carolina	34,510	30,264	31,972	-2,538	1,708	-7.4	5.6
Oklahoma	25,712	22,871	22,698	-3,014	-173	-11.7	-0.8
South Carolina	18,608	16,576	16,922	-1,686	346	-9.1	2.1
Tennessee	26,539	22,370	23,235	-3,304	865	-12.4	3.9
Texas	158,820	139,053	150,353	-8,467	11,300	-5.3	8.1
Virginia	36,091	27,052	27,417	-8,674	365	-24.0	1.3
West Virginia	6,800	4,651	4,793	-2,007	142	-29.5	3.1
WEST	**273,327**	**218,615**	**219,034**	**-54,293**	**419**	**-19.9**	**0.2**
Alaska	4,475	4,587	4,444	-31	-143	-0.7	-3.1
Arizona	42,441	33,584	34,787	-7,654	1,203	-18.0	3.6
California	125,507	98,039	94,717	-30,790	-3,322	-24.5	-3.4
Colorado	19,714	16,743	17,376	-2,338	633	-11.9	3.8
Hawaii	5,179	4,191	3,887	-1,292	-304	-24.9	-7.3
Idaho	9,437	9,138	9,763	326	625	3.5	6.8
Montana	2,784	2,760	2,916	132	156	4.7	5.7
Nevada	12,942	10,314	10,613	-2,329	299	-18.0	2.9
New Mexico	6,723	5,414	5,621	-1,102	207	-16.4	3.8
Oregon	15,755	12,276	12,056	-3,699	-220	-23.5	-1.8
Utah	6,731	5,934	6,469	-262	535	-3.9	9.0
Washington	19,160	13,373	14,147	-5,013	774	-26.2	5.8
Wyoming	2,479	2,262	2,238	-241	-24	-9.7	-1.1

Note: Prisons and jails form one unified system in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

PRISON CHANGE SINCE PEAK YEAR

The number of people in state and federal prisons in the United States reached a peak in 2009 and decreased 22 percent by spring 2024. States in the New York City tri-state area have all made the largest reductions from their respective peaks: New Jersey down 60 percent (peaking in 1999), New York down 55 percent (from 1999), and Connecticut down 49 percent (from 2007). Arkansas, Idaho, Nebraska, and North Dakota had all reached new peaks by spring 2024. (See table 4.)

TABLE 4.

State prison change since peak year

	Peak year	Peak prison population	Spring 2024	Difference	Percent change
UNITED STATES	2009	1,599,934	1,252,551	-347,383	-21.7
BOP	2012	217,815	156,007	-61,808	-28.4
NORTHEAST					
Connecticut	2007	20,924	10,580	-10,344	-49.4
Maine	2018	2,425	1,821	-604	-24.9
Massachusetts	1997	11,947	6,250	-5,697	-47.7
New Hampshire	2013	3,018	2,144	-874	-29
New Jersey	1999	31,493	12,593	-18,900	-60
New York	1999	72,899	32,918	-39,981	-54.8
Pennsylvania	2011	51,578	39,061	-12,517	-24.3
Rhode Island	2008	4,045	2,325	-1,720	-42.5
Vermont	2009	2,220	1,374	-846	-38.1
MIDWEST					
Illinois	2012	49,348	29,242	-20,106	-40.7
Indiana	2013	29,913	24,528	-5,385	-18
Iowa	2010	9,455	9,590	135	1.4
Kansas	2018	10,218	9,161	-1,057	-10.3
Michigan	2006	51,577	32,969	-18,608	-36.1
Minnesota	2015	10,798	8,348	-2,450	-22.7
Missouri	2017	32,601	23,884	-8,717	-26.7
Nebraska	2019	5,682	5,846	164	2.9
North Dakota	2015	1,795	1,929	134	7.5
Ohio	2015	52,233	45,063	-7,170	-13.7
South Dakota	2017	3,970	3,755	-215	-5.4
Wisconsin	2018	24,064	23,190	-874	-3.6

SOUTH					
Alabama	2012	32,431	27,208	-5,223	-16.1
Arkansas	2017	18,070	18,806	736	4.1
Delaware	2007	7,257	4,940	-2,317	-31.9
Florida	2010	104,306	88,031	-16,275	-15.6
Georgia	2009	56,986	51,002	-5,984	-10.5
Kentucky	2017	23,543	19,369	-4,174	-17.7
Louisiana	2012	40,172	28,387	-11,785	-29.3
Maryland	2002	24,162	16,178	-7,984	-33
Mississippi	2008	22,754	19,628	-3,126	-13.7
North Carolina	2010	40,382	31,972	-8,410	-20.8
Oklahoma	2016	29,916	22,698	-7,218	-24.1
South Carolina	2008	24,326	16,922	-7,404	-30.4
Tennessee	2017	28,980	23,235	-5,745	-19.8
Texas	2010	173,649	150,353	-23,296	-13.4
Virginia	2015	38,403	27,417	-10,986	-28.6
West Virginia	2016	7,162	4,793	-2,369	-33.1
WEST					
Alaska	2014	5,794	4,444	-1,350	-23.3
Arizona	2015	42,719	34,787	-7,932	-18.6
California	2006	175,512	94,717	-80,795	-46
Colorado	2008	23,274	17,376	-5,898	-25.3
Hawaii	2005	6,146	3,887	-2,259	-36.8
Idaho	2019	9,437	9,763	326	3.5
Montana	2019	4,723	2,916	-1,807	-38.3
Nevada	2016	13,757	10,613	-3,144	-22.9
New Mexico	2017	7,276	5,621	-1,655	-22.7
Oregon	2013	15,517	12,056	-3,461	-22.3
Utah	2013	7,077	6,469	-608	-8.6
Washington	2017	19,656	14,147	-5,509	-28
Wyoming	2018	2,543	2,238	-305	-12

Note: Prisons and jails form one unified system in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Prison Closures and New Prison and Jail Construction

Despite the reduction in the number of people in prison over recent years, officials are carrying out expansions of prison systems in at least 10 states. Conversely, a number of states are seeking to close prisons—although some, such as Illinois, are planning to rebuild new prisons on the same site.

THE FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICY CONTEXT OF PRISON CONSTRUCTION

In many states—including Alabama, Georgia, and Indiana—supply chain challenges, high inflation, and high interest rates in recent years drove up the costs of prison construction. These issues were further complicated by public opposition to municipal bond financing for prison infrastructure. For example, in 2021, investment firm Barclays Capital pulled out of a deal to underwrite Alabama's $3 billion prison plan amidst public pressure.[21] The pushback from advocates and investors referenced Barclays and other banking firms' 2019 pledges to stop financing private prisons.[22]

But these challenges have not stopped large prison projects from moving forward. Alabama found hundreds of millions in federal and state funds to pay for part of the project, and eventually put a $725 million project on the municipal bond market. Alabama found purchasers for $509 million of these bonds, many of them smaller financial firms.[23] Some activist investors think that Alabama's failure to raise the $725 million indicates growing awareness that bonds for prison construction are not good investments.[24] Conversely, in 2023, one of Alabama's financial firms touted the deal as a success, noting that Wall Street's refusal to finance correctional projects actually gives smaller firms like them a "competitive advantage."[25] Although the amount raised fell short of the project's total costs, state lawmakers supplemented it

with general fund dollars and pandemic relief funding. The federal agency responsible for oversight has not prohibited the use of coronavirus recovery funds for prison construction.[26] According to public records, by 2024 Alabama has spent $400 million of pandemic relief funding on prison construction.[27] Alabama Governor Kay Ivey and the state legislature also identified $100 million in general funds for the prison in fiscal year 2023, and $200 million from the state general fund at the start of the 2025 fiscal year.[28]

In some states, officials have cited high interest rates and aversion to debt as reasons to avoid the municipal bond market altogether. In these cases, prison construction is increasingly funded directly by massive public appropriations, either from the general budget or reserves. For example, Indiana is currently constructing a new prison using $1.2 billion in general funds. Some state lawmakers have criticized the decision, pointing out that the money could be used to meet immediate needs like shortfalls in public school budgets.[29] As detailed in this section of the report, Georgia, Idaho, Nebraska, and South Dakota are also building prisons largely using state general funds. Several states also used pandemic relief funds to cover the costs of prison construction, demonstrating their prioritization of carceral expansion over public services.

Several states...used pandemic relief funds to cover the costs of prison construction, demonstrating their prioritization of carceral expansion over public services.

JAIL CONSTRUCTION COSTS EXCEED $62 BILLION ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

The large number of local jail systems means it is beyond the scope of this report to empirically cover all new local jail projects. However, there is evidence that the country is in the midst of a jail construction boom and that these projects, like prisons, are also impacted by rising costs. In California during the 2010s, a wave of local jail construction funded by state grants led to increased jail construction costs, with increased demand from counties competing for scarce contractors and specialized materials.[30] Further, in New York City, where

the city has started construction on new jails in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens, cost projections have increased to $16 billion, nearly double the original estimate from 2019.[31] The state of Maryland is building a new jail and treatment complex for the city of Baltimore estimated to cost $1 billion, up 88 percent from initial estimates.[32]

This massive local spending is part of a national jail construction boom: Since 2002, more than 1,300 counties have allocated a total of $62.5 billion in public dollars to expand their carceral footprints (measured in 2024 dollars).[33] This ultimately increased the nation's capacity to lock people up in jails by nearly 40 percent—an increase that outpaced the growth in the national jail population.[34]

PRISON CONSTRUCTION

Prison construction projects are moving forward in at least 10 states, concentrated in places that have not substantially reduced prison populations, but also taking place in states like California and Illinois that are also closing prisons.

Alabama: In 2021, Alabama state legislators earmarked $1.3 billion for the construction of two new 4,000-bed prisons, despite the fact that the number of people held in the state's prisons had fallen by more than 18 percent since its peak in 2012 and is still down from pre-pandemic levels by nearly 5 percent.[35] Since 2021, the projected cost for just one of these facilities has risen rapidly. In September 2023, Alabama officials approved a final price for the Elmore County Prison of more than $1 billion, much higher than the initial $623 million contract from the year prior.[36] The state plans to pay using funds from the general budget, money borrowed through the bond market, and $400 million in federal dollars from pandemic relief funding from the American Rescue Plan Act.[37]

The prison-building project will have an outsized impact on the

state budget. The cost of the Elmore County facility alone is equal to nearly the entire budget of the Alabama Department of Mental Health, which provides services to more than 200,000 people annually.[38] Despite this, officials have expressed a commitment to spending more and moving forward with the second prison.[39]

Arkansas: In May 2023, a year after Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced plans to build a 3,000-bed prison by 2025, the state allocated $471 million for the project.[40] In spring 2023, the number of people in Arkansas state prisons surpassed the state's prior peak in 2017 and has reached new peaks every quarter since. While no site has been selected for the new prison and construction has not started, Arkansas has already expanded capacity to incarcerate at existing state facilities by using temporary beds. Between May and December 2023, the state added 822 beds to existing prisons. It is currently seeking approval for additional expansion—including through the conversion of gymnasiums into 60-bed prison units.[41] Arkansas is also working to convert a building in a women's prison that used to be a prison industrial work program into a housing unit.[42] The prioritization of prison expansion has occurred alongside new legislation that keeps people in prison for longer and makes it more difficult for them to qualify for parole.[43]

California: In March 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom announced a $380-million plan to renovate San Quentin State Prison, turning it into a "sweeping rehabilitation center modeled on the Scandinavian approach to incarceration" by 2025.[44] Newsom describes the project as the first of a new prison model, which he intends reproduce across state correctional facilities.[45] The project will be funded through a combination of a $360 million lease revenue bond and $20 million general fund appropriation.[46] Legislative budget analysts have raised concerns that the San Quentin project's expedited timeline is "unnecessary and problematic" and that carrying out similar projects across the state would be "extremely costly."[47]

Georgia: In February 2024, the state legislature finalized $437 million for ongoing construction of a 3,000-bed prison.[48] The project commenced in the wake of Governor Brian Kemp's 2022

proposal to spend $600 million of general funds on two new prisons.[49] It also occurs as Fulton County, Georgia, considers spending $1.7 to $2 billion on a new county jail.[50]

Idaho: State officials are moving forward with a new 848-bed women's prison and a 280-bed men's prison unit as components of a larger plan to expand and remodel prisons in the state.[51] As of March 2023, the state was negotiating a contract for the design of the facility.[52] Idaho lawmakers paid for both prisons with an appropriation of $150 million from the Idaho general fund in 2022.[53]

Illinois: Governor J. B. Pritzker announced a $900 million plan to rebuild two state prisons—the Stateville Correctional Center and Logan Correctional Center—in March 2024.[54] Both prisons are estimated to take three to five years to rebuild.

Indiana: In September 2023, Indiana began constructing the 4,200-bed Westville Correctional Facility. Although lawmakers approved $400 million for the prison in 2021, its scoped cost has since grown to $1.2 billion, making it the most expensive building project in the history of the state.[55] Department of Corrections officials attributed the changing costs to inflation and supply chain challenges—which they say drove up costs of labor, electronics, and steel.[56] They also argue that the original cost estimate, which was created by a design firm that is no longer working on the project, was too low.[57]

Instead of issuing bonds, state officials have opted to cover the additional $800 million using a cash appropriation, spending directly from the general budget. This decision has received pushback from some lawmakers, who argue the money could be used to meet more immediate needs.[58]

Montana: In March 2023, the state legislature expedited and approved more than $200 million to renovate low-security units at a state prison.[59] The construction will add at least 100 beds.[60]

Nebraska: After opening a new maximum-security prison unit and 160-bed women's facility in recent years, Nebraska is moving forward with an additional 1,500-bed prison.[61] In August 2023,

the state spent $17 million purchasing land for the project, with construction set to begin in 2024.[62] The funding for the project comes from the state general budget; appropriations staff approved $350 million in spring of 2023.[63] A January 2024 report presented to the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services by researchers at the University of Nebraska Omaha urged the state to reduce lengths of prison sentences and expand alternatives to incarceration—instead of building additional facilities—in order to address overcrowding in the correctional system.[64]

South Dakota: In February 2024, the state legislature allocated $236 million towards the construction of a new men's state prison.[65] The new facility, anticipated to cost between $500 and $600 million, is funded through a combination of general funds and reserves.[66] The state has also allocated $60 million in general funds for a new 288-bed women's prison, which is currently under construction, with a projected completion date in 2025 or 2026.[67]

Federal: In fall of 2022, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) revived a push for a new federal prison in Kentucky at a time when the number of people detained by the agency remained 28 percent below peak levels in 2012.[68] Projected to hold more than 1,400 people, the facility will cost at least $500 million in federal appropriations.[69] Although proponents of the prison have argued that it will bring jobs to the region, research has shown that prisons bring little, if any, economic benefits—and in some cases, may actually harm the local economy.[70] This is reinforced by the BOP's February 2024 draft environmental impact statement, which indicated that 40 percent of the prison's full time workforce will be composed of existing BOP employees, few of whom are expected to relocate to the local area.[71]

In response to budgetary constraints and declining numbers of people in prison, at least 11 states are seeking to close prisons.

PRISON CLOSURES

In response to budgetary constraints and declining numbers of people in prison, at least 11 states are seeking to close prisons. However, some states, such as Illinois, are planning to build new prisons on the same site.

Arizona: In January 2022, Arizona began closing its oldest state prison complex in Florence, following through on Governor Doug Ducey's 2020 announcement.[72] As a result, state prison officials transferred more than 2,000 people to La Palma Correctional Center, operated by private prison company CoreCivic.[73]

In December 2023, the state also ended its contract with the private prison provider Management and Training Corporation for the 500-bed minimum security prison in Marana.[74] According to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, the facility's population had been declining and averaged only 225 incarcerated people over the last several years.[75]

California: In June 2023, the California Correctional Institution, a 3,883-bed minimum-security prison, entered into the final phase of closure—a component of a broader plan to close four prisons as a cost-cutting measure in response to declining incarceration.[76] The prison's original closure date in 2021 had been delayed due to litigation. State officials also announced a planned closure date of May 2025 for the Chuckwalla Valley State Prison in Riverside County.[77]

In February 2024, the California Legislative Analyst's Office, the fiscal adviser for the state legislature, recommended five additional prison closures—on top of the four already planned. According to the office, doing so by the end of 2028 would save nearly $1 billion in general funds. Additionally, under state law, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is required to respond to declining incarceration with reductions in prison capacity. These recommendations align with demands of advocacy groups like Californians United for a Responsible Budget, which have called for the state to redirect prison funds towards community-based resources. However, as of this report's publication, Governor Gavin Newsom has yet to expand his prison closure plan.

Connecticut: In April 2023, Connecticut's governor announced the closure of Willard Correctional Institution, citing declining incarceration and crime rates in the state.[78] The closure, which comes in the wake of the shuttering of two other state prisons in

2021, is projected to save taxpayers $6.5 million annually.[79]

Illinois: As noted, Governor J. B. Pritzker announced a $900 million plan to demolish and rebuild two state prisons—the Stateville Correctional Center and Logan Correctional Center—in March 2024.[80] Stateville, near Joliet, was planned to close as early as September 2024; however, Logan, located near Springfield, is planned to remain open until the new prison is built in Chicago's southwest suburbs.[81]

Massachusetts: In January 2024, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey announced plans to close a medium-security men's prison, the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Concord, citing how the state had reached its lowest prison population in 35 years.[82] The facility was operating at 50 percent capacity at the time of the announcement, and its closure will save the state an estimated $16 million per year, according to the Department of Corrections.[83]

New Jersey: In May 2022, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy announced plans to close Southern State Correctional Facility, a prison in Delmont that can hold more than 2,000 people.[84] The agency described the plan as a prison "consolidation," as it intends to move people into neighboring Bayside State Prison and South Woods State Prison.[85] As of November 2023, the state also began closing Edna Mahan Correctional Facility, its only women's prison; however, the state intends to replace the facility with a "modern, more centrally-located" one.[86]

New York: Following a 2021 announcement to close six state prisons, in March 2022, Governor Kathy Hochul closed Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility, Willard Drug Treatment Campus, Southport Correctional Facility, Downstate Correctional Facility, and Rochester Correctional Facility.[87] Two years later, in January 2024, Governor Hochul unveiled a budget proposal to close up to five additional prisons.[88] The plan is projected to save $77 million in the first fiscal year and $128 annually thereafter.[89]

The state, which has closed 24 prisons since 2011 due to declining incarceration, is now developing plans to reuse and repurpose

former correctional facilities.[90]

Oregon: In January 2022, Governor Kate Brown closed the Shutter Creek Correctional Institution, a minimum-security 300-bed prison; the state had closed another minimum-security prison in July 2021. Although Brown initially intended a third minimum-security prison closure, she later reversed course: as of this report's publication, the final prison slated to close, the Warner Creek Correctional Facility, remains fully operational.[91]

Utah: In mid-year 2022, the state shut down the Utah State Prison in Draper to transfer people to a newly built facility in Salt Lake City with 3,600 prison beds.[92] Local officials in suburban Draper have long sought to redevelop the land used for the prison as a planned community; constructing a new prison in Salt Lake cost the state more than $1 billion.[93]

Virginia: In December 2023, the Virginia Department of Corrections announced plans to close four prisons—the Augusta Correctional Center, Sussex II State Prison, Haynesville Correctional Unit, and Stafford Community Corrections Alternative Program—and assume control of the state's sole privately operated prison by mid-year 2024.[94] The agency's decision was influenced by high maintenance costs and staffing shortages.

Washington: In June 2023, the Washington State Department of Corrections announced that it planned to close the Larch Corrections Center, a minimum-security, 240-bed prison, citing declining incarceration rates.[95]

Prison incarceration in many states currently remains below pre-pandemic levels and several states are also pursuing policies to further reduce the number of people incarcerated. This, combined with the recognition that costly carceral systems redirect public funding away from social services, should prompt states to consider additional prison closures.

Incarceration Rates

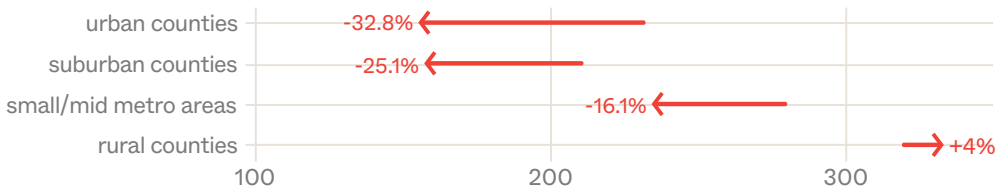
Between fall 2022 and spring 2024, incarceration rates in the United States increased 1.4 percent from 549 to 557 per 100,000 residents. State and federal prison incarceration rates increased 2.3 percent, and local jail incarceration rates did not change. (See "Overview of incarcerated populations in the United States and changes by region" in the appendix.)

Compared to summer 2019, total incarceration rates in spring 2024 were lower by 13 percent and down 24 percent since 2010.[96]

LOCAL JAIL INCARCERATION RATES

Since 2010, jail incarceration rates nationally have decreased 20 percent, from 255 to 204 per 100,000 residents in spring 2024. Urban jail incarceration rates were down by a third, from 234 to 156 per 100,000 residents. Jail incarceration rates in suburban counties, which used to be the lowest but are now just above urban counties, were down by 25 percent. Small and midsize metros had rates that were down 16 percent, from 282 to 235 per 100,000. In contrast, rural counties had jail incarceration rates that were up 4 percent, from 319 per 100,000 in 2010 to 333 in spring 2024. (See figure 4.)

FIGURE 4.
Local jail incarceration rate changes, from 2010 to spring 2024



The gap between local jail incarceration rates across the urban to rural continuum has widened over the last decade, as mass incarceration has continued to expand in rural areas. In 2010, local

jail incarceration rates in rural counties were 36 percent higher than urban counties. By 2013, this had risen to 51 percent higher, and by 2019, the rates in rural counties were double those in urban counties.

The gap in rates between urban and rural counties narrowed in the wake of 2020—and by spring 2021, rural county rates were only 91 percent higher than those found in urban counties. Nevertheless, the pre-pandemic patterns returned, and in spring 2024, local jail incarceration rates in rural counties were 2.1 times higher than the rates in urban counties. Additionally, in spring 2024, small to midsized metropolitan areas had local jail incarceration rates 50 percent higher than urban counties, up from 20 percent higher in 2010. And in spring 2024, local jail incarceration rates in suburban counties had converged with those in urban counties.

In spring 2024, local jail incarceration rates in rural counties were 2.1 times higher than the rates in urban counties.

This was a stark contrast to 1970, when urban jail incarceration rates were double those in rural counties—122 per 100,000 residents in urban counties compared to 58 in rural counties.

Analysis of local jail data by race across the urban to rural continuum indicates the highest jail incarceration rates for Black and Latino people are found in rural areas, followed by small and midsized metropolitan areas.[97] Black-white and Latino-white racial disparity ratios appear to be worsening across the urban to rural continuum but are increasing the most in small and midsized metropolitan areas. Urban county Black-white disparity ratios have increased 13 percent between 2019 and 2022, and Latino-white disparity ratios increased 10 percent.[98]

STATE PRISON INCARCERATION RATES

The burden of incarceration is not equally distributed in the United States. State prison incarceration rates vary widely, and many states are much lower or much higher than the national state prison incarceration rate of 327 per 100,000. (See table 5.) In spring 2024, Massachusetts had the lowest state prison

TABLE 5.

State prison incarceration rates 2019-2024

				Rate difference		Percent change	
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2024	2022-2024	2019-2024	2022-2024
NORTHEAST	**247**	**185**	**191**	**-56**	**6**	**-22.7**	**3.2**
Connecticut	345	280	292	-53	12	-15.4	4.3
Maine	164	119	130	-34	11	-20.7	9.2
Massachusetts	119	89	89	-30	0	-25.2	0
New Hampshire	193	147	153	-40	6	-20.7	4.1
New Jersey	210	140	136	-74	-4	-35.2	-2.9
New York	228	158	168	-60	10	-26.3	6.3
Pennsylvania	358	291	301	-57	10	-15.9	3.4
Rhode Island	259	212	212	-47	0	-18.1	0
Vermont	258	210	212	-46	2	-17.8	1
MIDWEST	**358**	**305**	**316**	**-42**	**11**	**-11.7**	**3.6**
Illinois	302	235	233	-69	-2	-22.8	-0.9
Indiana	405	340	357	-48	17	-11.9	5
Iowa	306	292	299	-7	7	-2.3	2.4
Kansas	349	287	312	-37	25	-10.6	8.7
Michigan	381	321	328	-53	7	-13.9	2.2
Minnesota	177	137	145	-32	8	-18.1	5.8
Missouri	424	382	385	-39	3	-9.2	0.8
Nebraska	292	282	295	3	13	1	4.6
North Dakota	235	227	246	11	19	4.7	8.4
Ohio	426	372	382	-44	10	-10.3	2.7
South Dakota	430	374	408	-22	34	-5.1	9.1
Wisconsin	411	359	392	-19	33	-4.6	9.2
SOUTH	**483**	**411**	**426**	**-57**	**15**	**-11.8**	**3.6**
Alabama	576	518	533	-43	15	-7.5	2.9
Arkansas	588	572	613	25	41	4.3	7.2
Delaware	585	490	479	-106	-11	-18.1	-2.2
Florida	447	378	389	-58	11	-13	2.9
Georgia	523	440	462	-61	22	-11.7	5
Kentucky	525	443	428	-97	-15	-18.5	-3.4
Louisiana	680	594	621	-59	27	-8.7	4.5
Maryland	306	248	262	-44	14	-14.4	5.6
Mississippi	654	660	668	14	8	2.1	1.2
North Carolina	329	283	295	-34	12	-10.3	4.2
Oklahoma	650	569	560	-90	-9	-13.8	-1.6
South Carolina	361	314	315	-46	1	-12.7	0.3
Tennessee	389	317	326	-63	9	-16.2	2.8
Texas	548	463	493	-55	30	-10	6.5
Virginia	423	312	315	-108	3	-25.5	1
West Virginia	379	262	271	-108	9	-28.5	3.4

WEST	**349**	**278**	**278**	**-71**	**0**	**-20.3**	**0**
Alaska	612	626	606	-6	-20	-1	-3.2
Arizona	583	456	468	-115	12	-19.7	2.6
California	318	251	243	-75	-8	-23.6	-3.2
Colorado	342	287	296	-46	9	-13.5	3.1
Hawaii	366	291	271	-95	-20	-26	-6.9
Idaho	528	471	497	-31	26	-5.9	5.5
Montana	260	246	257	-3	11	-1.2	4.5
Nevada	420	325	332	-88	7	-21	2.2
New Mexico	321	256	266	-55	10	-17.1	3.9
Oregon	374	290	285	-89	-5	-23.8	-1.7
Utah	210	175	189	-21	14	-10	8
Washington	252	172	181	-71	9	-28.2	5.2
Wyoming	428	389	383	-45	-6	-10.5	-1.5

Note: Prisons and jails form one unified system in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

incarceration rate, at 89 per 100,000 residents. Mississippi had the highest rate, at 668 per 100,000, or 7.5 times higher than Massachusetts on a per capita basis. Arkansas increased its state prison incarceration rate by 41 per 100,000 between fall 2022 and spring 2024. The increase was nearly half the total volume of state incarceration in Massachusetts.

In spring 2024, states in the Northeast had the lowest rates of state prison incarceration, at 191 per 100,000, down from a rate of 247 in 2019, a 23 percent decrease. The three states with the lowest state prison incarceration rates are in the Northeast: Massachusetts, Maine, and New Jersey.

States in the West had the second lowest rates of state prison incarceration, at 278 per 100,000, down from a rate of 349 in 2019, a 20 percent decrease.

In aggregate, states in the South had the highest state prison incarceration rates: 426 per 100,000 in spring 2024, down from 483 per 100,000 in 2019, a 12 percent decrease. The three with the highest state prison incarceration rates in spring 2024—Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas—are in the South. Nonetheless, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia had state prison incarceration rates

lower than the national average in spring 2024.

States in the Midwest had the second-highest state prison incarceration rates, at 316 per 100,000, down from 358 per 100,000 in 2019, a decrease of 12 percent. Four of the five fastest increases in state prison incarceration rates between 2022 and 2024 were in the Midwest: Wisconsin, South Dakota, Kansas, and North Dakota.

COMBINED STATE PRISON AND LOCAL JAIL INCARCERATION RATES

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia have comprehensive enough jail and prison data to estimate and calculate total state prison and local jail incarceration rates.

Of those, six were 20 percent below their 2019 rates in spring 2024: California, Hawaii, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington, DC. Three states were less than 5 percent below 2019 rates in spring 2024: Alaska, Georgia, and Louisiana.[99]

Louisiana's total state prison and local jail incarceration rate of 1,004 was 5.4 times higher than Massachusetts's total incarceration rate of 186 per 100,000.

Between fall 2022 and spring 2024, Kentucky's total incarceration rate declined from 749 to 667 per 100,000, a decrease of 11 percent. In contrast, the District of Columbia's total incarceration rate increased by 11 percent, from 577 to 641 per 100,000.

In terms of the difference in incarceration rates among these 27 states between 2019 and spring 2024, DC has the largest decrease, down 190 per 100,000 residents, followed by Kentucky at 166 and Virginia at 149 fewer incarcerated people per 100,000 residents.

TABLE 6.

Total incarceration rate, select states 2019-2024

				Rate difference		Percent change	
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2024	2022-2024	2019-2024	2022-2024
Alaska	612	626	606	-6	-20	-1	-3.1
California	493	411	395	-98	-16	-20	-3.8
Colorado	553	472	472	-81	-0	-15	-0.0
Connecticut	345	280	292	-52	13	-15	4.6
Delaware	585	490	479	-106	-11	-18	-2.3
District of Columbia	831	577	641	-190	64	-23	11.0
Florida	687	627	617	-69	-10	-10	-1.5
Georgia	850	787	823	-28	36	-3	4.6
Hawaii	366	291	271	-95	-20	-26	-7.0
Indiana	675	612	614	-62	2	-9	0.4
Kentucky	832	749	667	-166	-82	-20	-11.0
Louisiana	1,055	991	1,004	-50	13	-5	1.3
Maryland	445	381	396	-49	16	-11	4.1
Massachusetts	244	186	186	-58	1	-24	0.3
New Mexico	600	518	524	-76	6	-13	1.1
New York	318	239	251	-66	12	-21	5.2
North Carolina	511	456	474	-37	17	-7	3.8
Ohio	618	516	524	-94	7	-15	1.4
Oklahoma	921	836	811	-110	-25	-12	-3.0
Oregon	481	396	394	-86	-1	-18	-0.4
Pennsylvania	547	481	499	-49	18	-9	3.7
Rhode Island	259	212	212	-47	1	-18	0.2
Tennessee	733	618	634	-99	16	-13	2.6
Texas	750	683	694	-56	11	-7	1.6
Vermont	258	210	212	-45	2	-18	1.0
Virginia	673	502	523	-149	22	-22	4.3
West Virginia	597	497	488	-109	-9	-18	-1.7
Wisconsin	611	540	565	-46	25	-8	4.6

Federal Prisons and Federal Detention

Several federal agencies detain large numbers of people in federal prisons, local jails, and private facilities:

- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is one of the two agencies in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, along with Customs and Border Protection, that handle immigration detention. People incarcerated under ICE jurisdiction are facing civil immigration charges only, not criminal charges.

- The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) runs federal prisons, detention centers, and halfway houses primarily for people who have been sentenced to incarceration on federal charges. In a handful of states, BOP operates facilities for federal pretrial detention; however, in most states, federal courts rely on local jails for pretrial detention space.

- The U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) does not operate facilities directly. It incarcerates some people in federal facilities, but it contracts primarily with state and local governments and private prison companies to hold unconvicted people who are detained pretrial or convicted people awaiting transfer to a federal prison. In fiscal year 2019, 47 percent of people booked into USMS custody were there on criminal charges related to immigration. While the percentage detained due to criminal charges related to immigration declined to a low of 17 percent in fiscal year 2021, USMS expects that more people will be detained on immigration-related criminal charges in the near future: in its most recent budget request, USMS estimates that the number of people detained on criminal charges related to immigration in fiscal year 2025 will increase more than 50

USMS estimates that the number of people detained on criminal charges related to immigration in fiscal year 2025 will increase more than 50%.

percent compared to fiscal year 2023 levels, growing to 31 percent of all people detained.[100]

Because Vera did not include the USMS and ICE numbers in the total people in prison counts in the other tables in this report and has only partial coverage of people held for ICE and USMS in local jails or federal prisons, the total number of people incarcerated by federal agencies is presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7.

Incarceration by federal agencies, 2019-2024

				Percent change		
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2022	2019-2024	2022-2024
Federal Total	270,380	242,608	240,087	-10.3	-11.2	-1
Bureau of Prisons	175,116	159,474	156,007	-8.9	-10.9	-2.2
U.S. Marshals Service	63,642	62,365	56,501	-2	-11.2	-9.4
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement	42,751	30,446	36,931	-28.8	-13.6	21.3

Note: Corrected for double counting due to people held for USMS in BOP facilities: 11,129 in 2019, 9,677 in 2022, and 9,352 in 2024.

Federal agencies have not reduced incarceration to the same extent as some state prisons and local jails have in recent years. From fall 2022 to spring 2024, the 9 percent decline in the USMS detained population and 2 percent decline in the federal prison population were counterbalanced by the continued criminalization of immigration and detention of people with immigration cases in civil custody: ICE, which often detains people in local jails, increased its detention population by more than 21 percent between late 2022 and spring 2024.

The total number of people held in jails, prisons, and detention centers for key federal agencies was about 240,100 in spring 2024, roughly 11 percent lower than 270,400 in 2019.

Washington, DC: The District of Columbia has a local jail, but since 1997, Congress has ordered the transfer of people convicted of felonies in the District to the custody of the federal BOP. Congress also ordered DC prison closures, and DC closed all of its prisons between 1998 and 2001.[101] Thus, accounting for federal prison

populations requires understanding Washington, DC's special circumstances. In spring 2024, DC's local jail population (1,858 people) had largely returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, from 2019 to spring 2024, its federal prison population declined by roughly 38 percent, from 4,049 to 2,494 people (see table 2). The large decline in the number of people from DC incarcerated in federal prisons reduced overall incarceration in DC during this period.

Criminalization of Immigration in Local Jails and State Prisons

FEDERAL EFFORTS

Federal policymakers have sought to criminalize immigration by increasing restrictions on legal options to immigrate, creating offenses related to border crossing, expanding eligibility for deportation, and increasing funding for both civil immigration enforcement and federal criminal prosecution of border crossings. Since the 1994 crime bill, Congress has also authorized the Department of Justice to pay states and local governments for some of their expenses in incarcerating people, both pretrial and after sentencing, who are unauthorized to be in the United States and have been convicted of certain crimes.[102] Federal agencies also pay local governments directly on a contract basis for ICE detention, as well as USMS immigration-offense related pretrial detention. These efforts provide federal dollars that fund

incarceration infrastructure and operations at the local level and align local leaders with interests in criminalizing immigration.[103]

In addition to federal government efforts to criminalize immigration, state policymakers have sometimes sought to develop their own immigration-related policy. State efforts to criminalize immigrants can take shape alongside or in conflict with federal policy agendas. In states like Texas, people are being arrested and incarcerated for state-specific immigration related charges.

TEXAS OPERATION LONE STAR AND SB 4

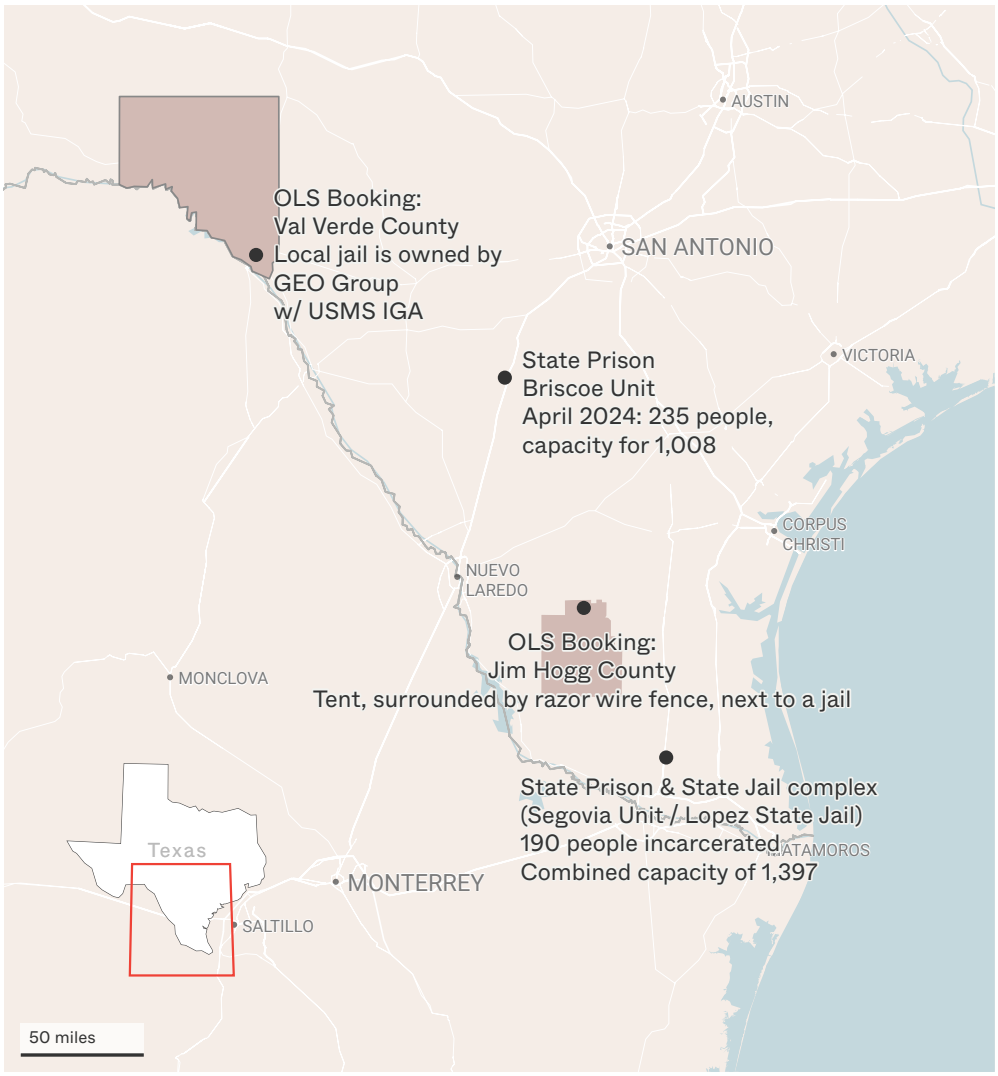
In March 2021, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced the beginning of Operation Lone Star, which would use resources from the state Department of Public Safety and National Guard to strengthen border enforcement measures.[104] Although immigration law is under the purview of the federal government, Texas officials found a loophole by prosecuting people it suspected of being in the United States without authorization under existing state law.[105] Texas ordered state and local law enforcement to arrest people crossing the border and incarcerate them on criminal misdemeanor charges.[106]

State efforts to criminalize immigrants can take shape alongside or in conflict with federal policy agendas.

In Val Verde County, Texas, officials used Operation Lone Star to make use of privately owned and operated carceral infrastructure that is already used by federal agencies like the USMS to detain people who are facing criminal charges related to immigration. More distinctive is their use of state prisons. For example, in the summer of 2021, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards began converting a state prison in Briscoe to a jail for immigrants.[107] A few months later, Val Verde County law enforcement began arresting and processing immigrants in the local jail (operated by private prison company Geo Group) before sending them to be detained in the Briscoe facility.[108] (See figure 5.) Local officials anticipated arresting as many as 200 immigrants per day by August 2021.[109]

FIGURE 5.

Key jails, prisons, and camps in Texas used for Operation Lone Star



The 2021 $1.8 billion allocation for Operation Lone Star was used by law enforcement, in part, to expand capacity to incarcerate people while their cases are being processed.[110] As of 2023, the program was in full swing, utilizing two state prisons, a state jail, and several booking centers.[111] Spending has increased to an estimated $11 billion by 2024.[112]

Operation Lone Star provided a source of revenue for cash-strapped counties like Kinney County, which received $3.2 million in funding from the program.[113]

Pretrial Detention in State Prison and Bail Setting in Operation Lone Star

One way of better understanding Operation Lone Star is by looking at how bail is set for people caught in that system.

Vera collected data on bail decisions by magistrates in Texas, with a special focus on Operation Lone Star trespassing cases from April 2022 to March 2024. The data shows that magistrates ensured people would be incarcerated in state prisons for pretrial detention by setting high bail amounts and not letting people post personal bonds. For non-Operation Lone Star cases in Texas, magistrates allowed one in five people charged with trespassing to post a personal bond and be released with a promise to pay. In Operation Lone Star cases, however, magistrates decided that only one in 200 people should be eligible for a personal bond.

The magistrates also set cash bail amounts higher for people caught up in Operation Lone Star. The people charged with trespassing and processed through the Val Verde and Jim Hogg County tent facilities tend to have cash bail amounts double those in the data for the rest of the state, with a median bail amount of $2,000 compared to a median of $1,000 for trespassing cases elsewhere.

Magistrates ensured people would be incarcerated in state prisons for pretrial detention by setting high bail amounts and not letting people post personal bonds.

Texas Is a Troubling Model for Other States

Passed in November 2023 in a special Texas legislative session, SB 4 built on Operation Lone Star. It empowered police officers to detain people and check their identification upon suspicion that they are in the country without documentation and attempted to set up a state deportation process with three new state criminal offenses: illegal entry, illegal reentry, and an offense related to refusing to be deported.[114] Currently tied up in the federal courts, this law has been blocked by court order apart from a few hours in March 2024, but it remains to be resolved whether this kind of approach will survive federal judicial review.[115] In the meantime, other states—including Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia—are attempting to implement similar laws.[116]

Conclusion

Vera's data shows that, in 2024, incarceration is increasingly concentrated in some states and in rural areas. And older adults—who have long been a substantial share of state and federal prison populations—now account for a larger proportion of people incarcerated in local jails. For its part, the federal government has increased immigration detention at the same time as states are making various attempts to criminalize immigrants and incarcerate them in local jails and state prisons. And states and local governments are spending billions on new and expanded prisons and jails, often paying directly from general funds due to escalating costs and fears about high interest rates. This large investment of money in prison and jail capacity, combined with notable increases in incarceration for subsets of the population and country, mean that although the national level of incarceration is still lower than during the years immediately prior to the pandemic, it remains to be seen how long that will last.

ENDNOTES

1 See “Prison closures and new prison and jail construction” on page 19.

2 Gregory W. Porter, “State Budget Inadvertently Funding School-to-Prison Pipeline,” *Indianapolis Recorder*, August 24, 2023, https://indianapolisrecorder.com/state-budget-inadvertently-funding-school-to-prison-pipeline/. The Alabama legislature and governor have identified money in the state general fund at the start of the 2025 fiscal year just under $200 million. The governor already earmarked $100 million for the prison in FY 2023. See 2024 Revised Statutes, SB67 enrolled, 117 https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/files/pdf/SearchableInstruments/2024RS/SB67-enr.pdf, indicating a $200 million appropriation for prison construction. On $100 million in FY 2023, see Mary Sell, “Funding New Prison in Escambia: ‘It Will Be a Challenge,” *Alabama Daily News*, Feb 13, 2024, https://aldailynews.com/funding-new-prison-in-escambia-it-will-be-a-challenge/; Brian Lyman, “New Elmore County men’s prison will cost over $1 billion,” *Alabama Reflector*, September 26, 2023, https://alabamareflector.com/2023/09/26/new-elmore-county-mens-prison-will-cost-over-1-billion/#:~:text=The%20Legislature%20in%202021%20approved,Escambia%20County%20for%20%241.3%20billion.

3 See for example, Anastasia Valeena, Weihua Li, and Susie Cagle, “Rifles, Tasers and Jails: How Cities and States Spent Billions of COVID-19 Relief,” The Marshall Project, September 7, 2022, https://www.themarshallproject.org/2022/09/07/how-federal-covid-relief-flows-to-the-criminal-justice-system. See also concern from advocates that the Treasury Department is not enforcing its own rules: ACLU National Prison Project, “Re: The widespread, improper use of COVID relief funds to build and expand jails and prisons,” letter to Richard Delmar, Deputy Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 18, 2023, https://www.aclu.org/documents/american-rescue-plan-act-arpa-covid-19-letter.

4 These include Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia, as well as others; see David Chen, “Inspired by Texas, Republicans in Other States Eye Immigration Bills,” *New York Times,* March 20, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/us/texas-immigration-republican-states.html. Courts have not been friendly to these efforts; see Miriam Jordan, “Judge Temporarily Blocks Florida from Criminalizing Transport of Undocumented Immigrants,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/us/florida-undocumented-immigrant-transport.html.

5 Human Rights Watch, *“So Much Blood on the Ground:” Dangerous and Deadly Vehicle Pursuits under Texas’ Operation Lone Star*, Human Rights Watch, November 27, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/11/27/so-much-blood-ground/dangerous-and-deadly-vehicle-pursuits-under-texas-operation. The report notes “Within days after Abbott’s first ‘disaster’ declaration, 500 National Guard forces volunteered for deployment and by the following fall, thousands of Texas state troopers and soldiers descended on border communities with orders to arrest migrants on state charges including criminal trespass, a workaround that allowed Texas to use state law to effectively assume federal immigration enforcement authority, under which federal authorities already carry out apprehension and prosecution of unauthorized migrants. To handle the growing volume of arrests, Texas has established a separate criminal legal system in tent facilities that charges and detains both migrants and Texans suspected of assisting them, jails them in converted state prisons, and handles their criminal cases with judges called back from retirement or diverted from other duties.”

6 Vera collected 2019 data primarily from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) National Prison Statistics data files and from the Census of Jails. See “National Prison Statistics (NPS) Program,” BJS, https://perma.cc/K6YD-DBG7; and

"Census of Jails (COJ)," BJS, https://perma.cc/9M5L-7DEL. Vera supplemented this with additional data from the Mortality in Correctional Institutions jail population data and with data collected directly from jails and prisons. See "Mortality in Correctional Institutions (MCI) (Formerly Deaths in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP))," BJS, https://perma.cc/6AXH-JWTC. For more information on Vera's data collection processes, see Jacob Kang-Brown, Oliver Hinds, Eital Schattner-Elmaleh, and James Wallace-Lee, *People in Jail in 2019* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2019), https://perma.cc/6V25-MN33; and Jacob Kang-Brown, Chase Montagnet, Eital Schattner-Elmaleh, and Oliver Hinds, *People in Prison in 2019* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2020), https://perma.cc/Q245-AB5T.

7 For a detailed look at this data, including information on COVID-19 cases, see Noelle Smart and Adam Garcia, "Tracking COVID-19 in Immigration Detention: A Dashboard of ICE Data," database (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, updated November 18, 2020), https://www.vera.org/tracking-covid-19-in-immigration-detention.

8 Additional data and tables are available online at trends.vera.org and at https://www.vera.org/publications/people-in-jail-and-prison-in-2024.

9 See, for example, Elizabeth Hinton and DeAnza Cook, "The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: A Historical Overview," *Annual Review of Criminology* 4 (2021), 261-286, https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-criminol-060520-033306. BJS publishes annual reports that provide national estimates of the number of people in jail and prison using data collected through the Annual Survey of Jails, Census of Jails, and National Prisoner Statistics data series. These reports provide statistics on jail and prison populations, including more detailed breakdowns by race and gender. Data for 2021 was published in December 2022. Zhen Zeng, *Jail Inmates in 2021 – Statistical Tables* (Washington, DC: BJS, 2021), https://perma.cc/5RDW-VMFN; and E. Ann Carson, *Prisoners in 2021 – Statistical Tables* (Washington, DC: BJS, 2021), https://perma.cc/Q98M-FWE9.

10 See for example, the collective report authored by a wide range of advocacy and legal reform organizations on human rights and incarceration of people until they die. Abolitionist Law Center, Amistad Law Project, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Center for Constitutional Rights, Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law Andy and Gwen Stern Community Lawyering Clinic, DROP LWOP Coalition, Promise of Justice Initiative, Release Aging People in Prison, Right to Redemption, and The Sentencing Project, *Death by Incarceration is Torture: The Cruelty of Life Imprisonment in the United States,* NGO Shadow Report before the United Nations Human Rights Committee, 139th Session, Geneva, 2023, https://ccrjustice.org/sites/default/files/attach/2023/09/ICCPR%20Report%20on%20Death%20By%20Incarceration.pdf. See also evidence of extremely high costs of continued incarceration of elderly people, Ashley Demyan, "Elderly People in Prison Present Little Risk, but Staggering Costs," Vera Institute of Justice, 2015, https://www.vera.org/news/elderly-people-in-prison-present-little-risk-but-staggering-costs.

11 See for example, Rebecca Silber, Léon Digard, Tina Maschi, Brie Williams, and Jessi LaChance, *A Question of Compassion: Medical Parole in New York State*, Vera Institute of Justice, April 2018, https://www.vera.org/publications/medical-parole-new-york-state. See also Rachel E. Barkow and Mark Osler, "Clemency," *Annual Review of Criminology,* 7 (2024): 311-327, https://www.annualreviews.org/docserver/fulltext/criminol/7/1/annurev-criminol-022222-040514.pdf.

12 Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, New York, and South Carolina changed their

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Appendix

APPENDIX TABLE 1.

Overview of incarcerated populations in the United States and changes by region

				Rate difference		Percent change	
	2019	Fall 2022	Spring 2024	2019-2024	2022-2024	2019-2024	2022-2024
Total Incarceration	**634**	**544**	**550**	**-84**	**6**	**-13.3**	**1.1**
Prisons	**435**	**366**	**374**	**-61**	**8**	**-13.9**	**2.3**
Total Jails	**230**	**204**	**204**	**-26**	**0**	**-11.3**	**0.0**
rural	362	326	333	-29	7	-8.0	2.1
small/mid	269	238	235	-34	-3	-12.6	-1.3
suburban	175	153	158	-17	5	-9.7	3.3
urban	178	159	156	-22	-3	-12.4	-1.9

Note: Incarceration rates shown per 100,000 people.

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