



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **U.S. CORRECTIONAL POPULATION DECLINED FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR**

#### *Prison population declined for first time in nearly four decades*

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported today that the number of offenders under adult correctional supervision in the U.S. declined 1.3 percent in 2010, the second consecutive year of decline since BJS began reporting on this population in 1980. At yearend 2010, about 7.1 million people, or 1 in 33 adults, were under the supervision of adult correctional authorities in the U.S.

In addition, the total U.S. prison population fell to 1.6 million at yearend 2010, a decline of 0.6 percent during the year, the first decline in the total prison population in nearly four decades. This decline was due to a decrease of 10,881 in the number of state prisoners, which fell to just under 1.4 million persons and was the largest yearly decrease since 1977. The federal prison population grew by 0.8 percent (1,653 prisoners) to reach 209,771, the smallest percentage increase since 1980.

Most offenders under correctional supervision (about 7 in 10 persons or nearly 4.9 million people) were supervised in the community on probation or parole at yearend 2010. About 3 in 10 (or nearly 2.3 million people) were incarcerated in state or federal prisons or local jails. The decline in the total correctional population during 2010 was mainly due to a decrease in the number of probationers during the year (down 69,500 persons) and a decrease in the number of inmates incarcerated in local jails (down 18,700 persons).

During 2010, prison releases (708,677) exceeded prison admissions (703,798). The decrease in commitments into state prison, especially the 3.3 percent decrease in the number committed from the courts on a new sentence, was responsible for the decline in the state prison population. The time that offenders entering state prison could expect to serve on a commitment, about 2 years, remained relatively stable between 2009 and 2010, which indicates that the decline in the state prison population during the year was the result of a decrease in admissions.

Half of state departments of corrections reported decreases in their prison population during 2010. California (down 6,213) and Georgia (down 4,207) reported the largest decreases, followed by New York (down 2,031) and Michigan (down 1,365). Illinois (up 3,257) reported the largest increase, followed by Texas (up 2,400) and Arkansas (up 996).

(MORE)

In 2010, the U.S. imprisonment rate dropped to 497 inmates per 100,000 residents, continuing a decline since 2007, when the imprisonment rates peaked at 506 inmates per 100,000 residents. The national imprisonment rate for males (938 per 100,000 male U.S. residents) was about 14 times the imprisonment rate for females (67 per 100,000 female U.S. residents).

Among offender age groups, about 3.1 percent of black males in the nation were in state or federal prison, compared to just under 0.5 percent of white males and 1.3 percent of Hispanic males. Also, an estimated 7.3 percent of all black males ages 30 to 34 were incarcerated with a sentence of more than 1 year.

States held 2,295 inmates under age 18 in custody at midyear 2010, down from 2,779 at midyear 2009. At midyear 2010, states held 95,977 persons in custody who were not U.S. citizens, down slightly from midyear 2009 when they held 97,133.

The report, *Correctional Population in the United States, 2010* (NCJ 236319), was written by BJS statistician Lauren E. Glaze. *Prisoners in 2010* (NCJ 236096) was written by BJS statisticians Paul Guerino, Paige M. Harrison, and William J. Sabol. Following publication, both reports can be found at <http://www.bjs.gov>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.