



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS  
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### **U.S. JAIL POPULATION DECLINES FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR**

WASHINGTON – The U.S. jail inmate population declined for a third consecutive year, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. From June 2010 to June 2011, the jail inmate population declined 1.8 percent, dropping to 735,601 from 748,728.

Local jails, unlike prisons, are confinement facilities mainly operated by a local law enforcement agency. Jails typically hold inmates while they await court action or serve a sentence of one year or less.

In midyear 2011, the jail incarceration rate dropped to the lowest level since 2002. Jails confined 236 inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents in June 2011, down from 238 inmates per 100,000 in June 2003.

The decline in confined population in the largest jails—those with an average daily population of more than 1,000 inmates—accounted for more than half (53 percent) of the total decline of 13,127 inmates that occurred during 2011. An overall decline was also observed in the jail jurisdictions with an average daily population of fewer than 1,000 inmates.

Jails were operating at 84 percent of their rated capacity at midyear 2011, the lowest percentage since 1984. The total rated capacity for all jails nationwide reached 877,302 beds at midyear 2011, up from 866,782 beds at midyear 2010, about a 1 percent increase in the number of beds.

At midyear 2011, about 61 percent of inmates were not convicted, but were in jail awaiting court action on a current charge—a rate unchanged since 2005. About 39 percent of inmates were sentenced offenders or convicted offenders awaiting sentencing.

During the 12 months ending midyear 2011, local jails admitted an estimated 11.8 million persons, down from 12.9 million persons admitted during the same period in 2010 and 13.6 million in 2008. The number of persons admitted in 2011 was about 16 times the size of the inmate population (735,601) at midyear 2011. Nearly four in 10 admissions during the last week of June 2011 were to the largest jail jurisdictions.

(MORE)

Small jail jurisdictions holding fewer than 50 inmates accounted for about seven percent of all jail admissions. However, the number of inmates admitted to these jails was about 32 times the size of their inmate population on June 30, 2011.

Jail authorities were also responsible for supervising 62,816 offenders outside of the jail facilities, including 11,950 under electronic monitoring, 11,369 in weekend programs, 11,680 in community service programs, and 10,464 in other pretrial release programs. An additional 17,353 offenders were also supervised through home detention without electronic monitoring, day reporting, treatment programs, and other unspecified programs.

The report, *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2011 – Statistical Tables* (NCJ 237961), was written by BJS statistician Todd D. Minton. Following publication, the report can be found at <http://www.bjs.gov>. After release of the report, the public-use data set for the 2011 Annual Survey of Jails will be available at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at <http://dx.doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR33722.v1>.

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 Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, 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>.