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## Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

# Jail Inmates 1986

At midyear 1986, local jails in the United States held an estimated 274,444 persons, 7% more than a year earlier. Overall, jail occupancy was 96% of the rated capacity of the Nation's jails. The average daily jail population for the year ending June 30, 1986, was 265,517, about the same as in 1985, and a 17% increase since 1983.<sup>1</sup> These findings are from the 1986 Annual Survey of Jails, which obtained data from 1,137 jails in 868 jurisdictions, a representative sample of the Nation's jails. Approximately 1 of 3 jails across the country was surveyed.<sup>2</sup>

#### Other survey findings include:

- During the year ending June 30, 1986, there were 16.6 million jail admissions and releases.
- Males constituted 92% and females 8% of all jail inmates. Whites were 58% of the local jail population; blacks, 41%; and other races, 1%. Hispanics were 14% of all inmates.
- Unconvicted inmates (those on trial or awaiting arraignment or trial) were 53% of the adults being held in jails; convicted inmates (those awaiting or serving a sentence or returned to jail for violating probation or parole) were 47%.
- There were 361 jurisdictions with at least 100 jail inmates. Together these jurisdictions had 612 jails, which held a total of 207,007 inmates, or about 75% of all jail inmates in the country. In these jurisdictions:
  - The overall occupancy rate was 108% of rated capacity;
  - 26% of the jails held inmates because of crowding elsewhere;

<sup>1</sup>For a complete enumeration of jail inmates from the 1978 and 1983 jail censuses and the 1984-86 annual surveys of jails, see appendix table, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>For a definition of local jails see Methodology.

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This bulletin presents findings from the fourth Annual Survey of Jails. The survey was developed to provide an estimate of the country's jail inmate population in the years between National Jail Censuses, which are conducted every 5 years. The most recent census was in 1983, and another is scheduled for 1988.

BJS efforts to collect accurate information on jail populations are vital to policymakers and the general public in assessing the demands placed on correctional resources.

The Annual Survey of Jails was made possible through the cooperation of local jail administrators across the country whose facilities were selected for inclusion in the survey.

Steven R. Schlesinger  
Director

--23% of the jails were under court order to limit population, and 27% were under court order to improve one or more conditions of confinement.  
--23% of the jails reported inmate deaths during the year. There were a total of 277 inmate deaths, down 9% from the preceding year. Of these deaths 52% were from natural causes. Suicides were down 10%, from 119 in 1985 to 107 in 1986.

#### One-day counts

On June 30, 1986, the estimated number of inmates held in local jails was 274,444, an increase of 7% over the number held on that date a year earlier (table 1). Between 1983, the year of the most recent full census of jails, and 1986 the Nation's jail population had increased 23%, for an average annual rate of about 8%. One of every 648

adult residents of the United States was in jail on June 30, 1986.

Most juveniles in correctional custody (about 83,000 in 1985) are housed in juvenile facilities. Fewer than 1% of the inmates of the Nation's jails in 1986 were juveniles. An estimated 1,708 juveniles were housed in adult jails across the country on June 30, 1986.<sup>3</sup>

#### Average daily population

The average daily population for the year ending on June 30, 1986, was 265,517--the same as the average daily population during the previous year.<sup>4</sup> The average daily population for males increased 16% since 1983; during the same period of time, female average daily population increased 37%. The average daily juvenile population for the year ending June 30, 1986, was 1,404--an estimated 4% below the average daily population for the previous year.

#### Adult detention status

On June 30, 1986, convicted inmates made up 47% of the adults with a detention status, a decrease from 49% in 1983 (table 2). From 1985 to 1986, the number of convicted females increased 7%. Convicted inmates include those awaiting sentencing or serving a sentence and those returned to jail because they violated the conditions of their probation or parole.

The number of unconvicted inmates increased 25% since 1983. From 1985 to 1986 the number of unconvicted adult males increased 11%. Unconvicted inmates include those on trial or awaiting arraignment or trial.

<sup>3</sup>For a definition of juveniles see Methodology.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of the differences between 1-day population counts and average daily population counts see Methodology.

## Demographic characteristics

Males accounted for 92% of the jail inmate population (table 3). The adult male inmate population increased 6% between 1985 and 1986, and 22% since

1983. The number of adult female inmates in local jails increased 37% since 1983. One of every 338 adult males and 1 of every 4,318 adult females residing in the United States were in a local jail on June 30, 1986.

White inmates made up 58% of the jail population; blacks, 41%; and other races (native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders), approximately 1% of the population.

The Hispanic percentage of the jail population remained unchanged from 1985 to 1986 at 14%. About 18% of the whites and 5% of the blacks were Hispanic.

Table 1. Jail population: One-day counts and average daily population, by legal status and sex, 1983, 1985, 1986

	Number of jail inmates			Percent change from:	
	National jail census 1983	Annual survey of jails		1983-86	1985-86
<b>One-day counts</b>					
All inmates	223,551	256,615	274,444	23%	7%
Adults	221,915	254,986	272,736	23	7
Male	206,163	235,909	251,235	22	6
Female	15,652	19,077	21,501	37	13
Juveniles*	1,736	1,629	1,708	-2	5
<b>Average daily population</b>					
All inmates	227,541	265,010	265,517	17%	-%
Adults	225,731	263,543	264,113	17	-
Male	210,451	244,711	243,143	16	-1
Female	15,330	18,832	20,970	37	11
Juveniles*	1,760	1,467	1,404	-20	-4

Note: Data for 1-day counts are for June 30 of each year.  
 —Less than .5%  
 \*Juveniles are persons of an age specified by State statute (usually under 18) initially subject to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. Because fewer than 1% of the jail population were juveniles, caution must be used in interpreting any changes over time.

Table 2. Detention status of adult jail inmates, by sex, 1983, 1985, 1986

	Number of jail inmates		
	National jail census 1983	Annual survey of jails	
Total number of adults with known conviction status	221,644	250,468	269,179
Convicted	107,660	123,409	127,067
Male	100,557	114,131	117,100
Female	7,103	9,278	9,967
Unconvicted	113,984	127,059	142,112
Male	105,459	117,560	130,806
Female	8,525	9,499	11,306

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of jail inmates, 1985 and 1986

Characteristic	Percent of jail inmates	
	1985	1986
<b>Sex</b>		
Total	100%	100%
Male	92	92
Female	8	8
<b>Race</b>		
White	59%	58%
Male	55	54
Female	4	4
Black	40%	41%
Male	37	37
Female	3	3
Other*	1%	1%
Male	1	1
Female	—	—
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic	14%	14%
Male	13	13
Female	1	1
Non-Hispanic	86%	86%
Male	80	80
Female	7	7

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year. Sex was reported for all inmates in both years. Race and ethnicity were reported for 80% of the inmates in 1985 and for 98% in 1986. Percentages may not add to total because of rounding.  
 —Less than 0.5%.  
 \*Native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

## Population movement

During the year ending June 30, 1986, there were an estimated 16.6 million admissions and releases from local jails, about equally divided between the two categories (table 4). The estimated volume of releases increased by about 4% between 1983 and 1986. Adults comprised 99% of admissions and releases in each year since 1983. Total admissions and releases for the year ending June 30, 1986, were 41,920 for juvenile females, 142,488 for juvenile males, 1.7 million for adult females, and 14.8 million for adult males.

Table 4. Annual jail admissions and releases, by legal status and sex, 1983, 1985, 1986

	Number of admissions/releases		
	National jail census 1983	Annual survey of jails	
<b>Admissions, total</b>	8,084,344	8,364,533	8,354,032
Adults	7,978,978	8,252,427	8,261,176
Male	7,270,663	7,430,148	7,410,057
Female	708,315	822,279	851,119
Juveniles*	105,366	112,106	92,856
Male	86,850	94,579	72,046
Female	18,516	17,527	20,810
<b>Releases, total</b>	7,941,236	8,279,054	8,284,676
Adults	7,837,156	8,169,461	8,193,124
Male	7,145,818	7,359,076	7,342,940
Female	691,338	810,385	850,184
Juveniles*	104,080	109,593	91,552
Male	85,564	92,235	70,442
Female	18,516	17,358	21,110

Note: Data are for the year ending June 30.  
 \*Juveniles are persons of an age specified by State statute (usually under 18) initially subject to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court.

## Occupancy

The number of jail inmates increased 23% since 1983, while the total rated capacity of the Nation's jails rose 9% (table 5). More than half of this increase in jail capacity occurred between 1985 and 1986. Between 1983 and 1986 the percent of rated capacity occupied rose 11 percentage points to 96%.

### Characteristics of jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations

On June 30, 1986, three-fourths of the Nation's jail population were housed in the jails of 361 jurisdictions, each with an average daily population of at least 100 inmates. Together they accounted for 612 jails, 2 less than in 1985. They held 207,007 inmates, a 9% increase over 1985, and a 23% increase since 1983.

The Nation's 25 largest jails had average daily populations ranging from 1,110 to 8,002 (table 6). Nine of these facilities were located in California, and 4 were in New York.

### Inmates held because of crowding elsewhere

Approximately 26% of the jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations held inmates because of crowding elsewhere in 1986, compared to 22% in 1985 and 21% in 1983 (table 7). About 69% of the jails that were holding inmates because of crowding elsewhere in 1986 were holding them for State authorities.

The percentage of inmates in jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations held for other authorities was 3% in 1983 and 4% in 1986.

The number of inmates held because of crowding elsewhere increased 68% between 1983 and 1986. Approximately a third of this increase occurred between 1985 and 1986. Most inmates held because of crowding elsewhere (74%) were being housed in local jails due to crowding in State prisons.

Table 5. Jail capacity and occupancy, 1983, 1985, 1986

	National jail census	Annual survey of jails	
	1983	1985	1986
Number of inmates	223,551	256,615	274,444
Rated capacity of jails	261,556	272,830	285,725
Percent of rated capacity occupied	85%	94%	96%

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year.

Table 6. Twenty-five largest jails: Average daily population and 1-day count, June 30, 1986

City and Jail	Average daily population, 1986*	One-day count, June 30, 1986
Los Angeles, Calif.—Men's Central Jail	8,002	7,793
Chicago, Ill.—Department of Corrections County Jails	5,052	5,113
Houston, Tex.—County Downtown Central Jail	3,765	3,755
Washington, D.C.—D.C. Detention Facility	2,365	2,535
Queens, N.Y.—NYC Correctional Institute for Men	2,112	2,017
Queens, N.Y.—Anna M. Kross Center	2,100	2,100
Los Angeles, Calif.—Sybil Brand Institute	1,877	2,204
Pleasanton, Calif.—County Jail Santa Rita	1,873	1,877
Baltimore, Md.—Baltimore City Jail	1,833	1,899
Los Angeles, Calif.—Hall of Justice Jail	1,717	1,696
Saugus, Calif.—Pitchess Honor Rancho—maximum security	1,683	1,609
Santa Ana, Calif.—Orange County Jail	1,580	1,636
Queens, N.Y.—NYC Adolescent Detention Center	1,575	1,567
Saugus, Calif.—Pitchess Honor Rancho—minimum security	1,506	1,599
Miami, Fla.—County Pre-Trial Detention Center	1,459	1,495
Fort Worth, Tex.—Tarrant County Jail	1,425	1,502
Los Angeles, Calif.—Biscailuz Center	1,301	1,524
Philadelphia, Penna.—House of Correction	1,286	1,279
Seattle, Wash.—King County Jail Facilities	1,282	1,443
Philadelphia, Penna.—Holmesburg Prison	1,155	1,104
Philadelphia, Penna.—Detention Center	1,160	1,115
Memphis, Tenn.—County Justice Center	1,143	1,263
Indianapolis, Ind.—Marion County Jail	1,130	1,141
Elk Grove, Calif.—Rio Cosumnes Corrections Center	1,116	1,219
East Elmhurst, N.Y.—NYC Correctional Institute for Women	1,110	1,197

\*For the year ending June 30, 1986.

Table 7. Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations: Impact of inmates held for other authorities, 1983, 1985, 1986

	Number of jails/inmates		
	1983	1985	1986
<b>All jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations</b>	618	614	612
Jails holding inmates for other authorities:	130	137	159
Federal	31	30	41
State	84	100	109
Local	44	57	54
<b>All inmates in jurisdictions with large jail populations</b>	168,250	190,221	207,007
Inmates being held for other authorities:	4,400	6,107	7,389
Federal	306	534	846
State	3,606	4,462	5,475
Local	488	1,111	1,068

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year and cover all jails in jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census.

\*Detail adds to more than total because some jails hold inmates for more than one authority.

Table 8. Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations: Rated capacity and percent of capacity occupied, 1985 and 1986

Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations	Number of jails		Rated capacity		Number of jail inmates		Percent of capacity occupied	
	1985	1986	1985	1986	1985	1986	1985	1986
Total	614	612	179,729	191,069	190,221	207,007	106%	108%
Jails not under court order to reduce population	477	473	126,965	130,926	134,967	144,252	106	110
Jails under court order to reduce population*	137	139	52,764	60,143	55,254	62,755	105	104

Note: Data are for June 30 of each year and cover all jails in jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census. \*The court-ordered capacity for these jails in 1985 was 54,375 (1,611 inmates higher than the rated capacity). In 1986 it was 60,801 (658 inmates higher than the rated capacity).

*Jails under court order*

Between 1985 and 1986 the rated capacity of jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations increased by 6% (table 8). Although an estimated 96% of the rated capacity of the Nation's jails was occupied on June 30, 1986, occupancy exceeded rated capacity by about 8% among jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations. Nearly 23% (139) of the jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations were under court order to reduce the number of inmates they housed. The combined court-ordered capacity for jails under court order was 60,801, and they were occupied at approximately 3% over court-ordered capacity.

Twenty-seven percent (166) of the jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations reported that they were under court order to improve one or more conditions of confinement (table 9). Among these jails 86% were cited for crowded living units, 51% for inadequate recreational facilities and services, and 41% for deficient medical facilities and services.

*Inmate deaths*

Approximately 23% of the jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations reported inmate deaths during the year ending June 30, 1986, down from 27% in 1985 (table 10).

The most common cause of death in jails in 1986, as in 1984 and 1985, was natural causes. Of the 277 inmate deaths in 1986, 52% were by natural causes, 39% were suicides, 5% were by accidents or undetermined causes, and 4% were from injuries caused by other persons.

*Methodology*

The 1986 Annual Survey of Jails was the fourth such survey in a series sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The first was conducted in 1982.

Table 9. Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations: Number of jails under court order to reduce population or to improve conditions of confinement, 1986

	Number of jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations		
	Total	Ordered to limit population	Not ordered to limit population
Total	612	139	473
Jails under court order citing specific conditions of confinement	166	123	43
Subject of court order:			
Crowded living units	142	118	24
Recreational facilities	85	62	23
Medical facilities or services	68	52	16
Visitation practices or policies	51	37	14
Disciplinary procedures or policies	55	44	11
Food service (quantity or quality)	47	37	10
Administrative segregation procedures or policies	47	33	14
Staffing patterns	58	43	15
Grievance procedures or policies	45	39	6
Education or training programs	44	29	15
Fire hazards	33	27	6
Counseling programs	32	20	12
Other	32	22	10

Note: Data are for June 30, 1986, and cover all jails in jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census. Some jails were under court order for more than one reason.

Table 10. Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations: Inmate deaths during 1983-1986

	Jails reporting deaths <sup>a</sup>				Inmate deaths			
	1983	1984	1985	1986	1983	1984	1985	1986
Total	169	150	163	138	276	278	303	277
Cause of death:								
Natural causes <sup>b</sup>	87	83	84	78	129	136	151	145
Suicide	99	96	89	78	130	126	119	107
Injury by another person	5	5	9	6	5	6	11	11
Other <sup>c</sup>	11	10	16	10	12	10	22	14

Note: Data are for the year ending June 30 and cover all jails in jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more in the 1983 jail census. <sup>a</sup>Detail adds to more than total because some jails reported more than one type of death. <sup>b</sup>Includes three deaths attributed to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) in 1984, six deaths attributed to AIDS in 1985, and eight deaths attributed to AIDS in 1986. The number of deaths attributed to AIDS was not available for 1983. <sup>c</sup>Includes accidents and undetermined causes of death.

Complete enumerations of the Nation's jails are conducted every 5 years. Annual surveys, which collect data on all jails in jurisdictions with 100 or more jail inmates and on a sample of all other jails, are done in each of the 4 years between full censuses. The reference date for the 1986 survey was June

30, 1986. Full censuses were done on February 15, 1978, and June 30, 1983.

A local jail is a facility that holds inmates beyond arraignment, usually for more than 48 hours, and is administered by local officials. Specifically

excluded from the count were temporary lockups that house persons for less than 48 hours, Federal- or State-administered facilities, privately operated facilities, and the combined jail-prison systems of Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The 1986 survey included a total of 1,137 jails in 868 jurisdictions. A jurisdiction is a county, municipality, or township that administers one or more local jails. The jails in 361 jurisdictions were automatically included in the survey because the average daily inmate population in these jurisdictions was 100 or more in the 1983 jail census. The jurisdictions with large jail populations, referred to as certainty jurisdictions, accounted for 612 jails and 207,007 inmates, or 75% of the estimated inmate population on June 30, 1986. The other jurisdictions surveyed constituted a stratified random sample of those jurisdictions whose average daily population was less than 100 in the 1983 jail census.

Data were obtained by mailed questionnaires. Two follow-up mailings and phone calls were used to encourage reporting. The response rate was 98% for jails not included in the certainty jurisdictions. Jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations responded at a rate of 95%.

National estimates for the inmate population on June 30, 1986, were produced by sex, race, legal status, and conviction status; for the average daily population during the year ending June 30, 1986, by sex and legal status; and for admissions and releases during the year ending June 30, 1986, by sex and legal status. National estimates were also produced for jail design capacity and rated capacity. Administrators of jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations provided counts of inmates held due to crowding elsewhere, inmate deaths, and jails under court order.

Except for racial and ethnic characteristics, data from the 1985 annual survey of jails were used to estimate individual items of data not available from 32 respondents in 1986. Data from the 1984 jail sample survey or the 1983 jail census were used to estimate individual items of data not available from 13 respondents in 1986.

National estimates have an associated sampling error (standard error) because jails with average daily populations of less than 100 were included in the survey on a sample basis. Results presented in this bulletin were tested to determine whether or not statistical

Appendix table. One-day counts and average daily population of jail inmates, 1978, 1983-86

	Number of jail inmates				
	National Jail Census		Annual Survey of Jails		
	1978	1983	1984	1985	1986
<b>One-day counts</b>					
All inmates	158,394	223,551	234,500	256,615	271,444
Adults	156,783	221,815	233,018	254,986	272,736
Male	147,506	206,163	216,275	235,909	251,235
Female	9,277	15,652	16,743	19,077	21,501
Juveniles*	1,611	1,736	1,482	1,629	1,708
<b>Average daily population</b>					
All inmates	157,930	227,541	230,641	265,010	265,517
Adults	156,190	225,731	228,944	263,543	264,113
Male	146,312	210,451	212,749	244,711	243,143
Female	9,878	15,330	16,195	18,832	20,970
Juveniles*	1,740	1,760	1,697	1,467	1,404

Note: Data for 1-day counts are for February 15, 1978; June 30, 1983; June 30, 1984; June 30, 1985; and June 30, 1986.  
\*Juveniles are persons of an age specified by State statute (usually under 18) initially subject to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. Because fewer than 1% of the jail population were juveniles, caution must be used in interpreting any changes over time.

significance could be associated with observed differences between values. Differences were tested to ascertain whether they were significant at 2.0 standard errors (the 95% confidence level) or higher. Differences mentioned in the text meet or exceed this confidence level.

Two measures of inmate population are used: the average daily population for the year ending June 30 and the inmate count on June 30 of each year. The average daily inmate population balances out any extraordinary events that may render the 1-day count atypical. The 1-day count is useful because some characteristics of the inmate population, such as race, ethnicity, and detention status, can be obtained for a specific date from jails that may not be available on an annual basis.

State statutes and judicial practices allow juveniles to be incarcerated in adult jails and prisons under a variety of circumstances. Juveniles are persons of an age (usually under 18) specified by statute in each State, who were initially subject to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 recommends that those juveniles held in adult jails who were not tried as adults in criminal court be separated from the adult inmate population by both sight and sound. A 1980 amendment to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 requires the removal of juveniles from local jails, except those juveniles who are tried as adults on criminal felonies. The proportion of juveniles in adult jails who were housed in accordance with these guidelines is not available.

All calculations in this report involving general population figures used Bureau of the Census estimates of the population for July 1, 1986, reported in "Current Population Reports," Series P-25, No. 1000.

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The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.