

# State Data





## Introduction to State Data

**W**hile crime is a problem across our nation, most of the resources that are expended to police our communities, adjudicate and sentence criminals, and supervise offenders are state and local resources. Moreover, justice system policies are developed in statehouses around the country. This being the case, it is important to examine statistical trends for each individual state to understand how justice system policy can affect crime.

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This part of the Atlas provides information for each of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. The graphs presented in this section offer an overview of selected social indicators for each state, along with information on trends in crime and sentencing. In addition, each state display includes a statistical profile, which provides information on selected demographic characteristics of the state's population, along with justice system expenditures and the number of staff employed by state correctional facilities. This profile is designed to provide a context for the crime and correctional data presented in the display.

The state displays begin with a bar chart depicting selected social indicators for 1990 and 1997. The graphic shows the proportion of each state's adult population that did not graduate from high school, the proportion unemployed, and the percentage of all residents that lived below the poverty level. Also shown is the percentage of births to teenage mothers. These are some of the social indicators that criminologists believe are associated with high rates of crime. Thus lower rates on all four indicators are desirable, as are reductions in the proportions from 1990 to 1997.

The next three graphs depict 24-year trends in reported crime rates for the most serious types of violent and property crimes. State policymakers can examine the trends for each crime type, and compare trends across types, to gain a better understanding of the particular nature of the crime problem in their own state.

As crime has increased over the last decade, law enforcement resources have also increased. The next display shows the number of sworn law enforcement officers and civilian employees of law enforcement agencies for the years 1991, 1995, and 1998. Also shown is the percent of change in the number of both officers and civilian employees from 1991 to 1998. Examination of these trends reveals the degree to which states have had to allocate additional resources to combat crime in their local communities.

Juvenile delinquency is widely perceived as a growing problem in our country. State policymakers need to understand the nature of the changes in juvenile crime rates, and how these might vary in terms of the types of crimes committed by juveniles. The next display shows trends from 1991 to 1998 in the juvenile arrest rates for three broad crime types: violent offenses, drug offenses, and weapons offenses. Policymakers should be cautious in interpreting these trends, since arrests are an imperfect indicator of juveniles' involvement in crime.

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Changes in crime rates, along with changes in justice system policies and procedures, have implications for all of the various justice system components. The next two graphs show the rates per 100,000 citizens of adults entering prison, supervised on probation, parole, or in prison, and released from prison. The first graph shows 17-year trends in the rates of new court commitments to prison, and conditional and unconditional releases from prison. While new commitments and releases tend to track one another over time, variations in the patterns and types of releases relative to commitments can provide interesting information with important implications for correctional managers.

The final display shows changes in the number of offenders on probation, parole, and in prison in 1982, 1990, and 1998. These related changes show that while all components of the criminal justice system have seen increases in the number of offenders for whom they are responsible, some components have grown at a faster rate than others.

The statistical trends shown for each state provide an overview of some of the issues and challenges facing justice system policymakers. More detailed analysis of these and other related data can provide policymakers with useful information that can inform state-level justice system policy.

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## State Data Sources

### Social Indicators

*Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1998, 1999*, U.S. Census Bureau.

### Violent and Property Crime Trends

*Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1975–1998.

Individual police agencies report data to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). The number of agencies reporting within a state may vary from year to year. If a large city fails to report in a given year, that state's crime and arrest totals will be artificially low for that year.

Due to various reporting problems as well as the conversion of some states to the National Incident-Based Reporting System, little or no data were reported to UCR for some states in some years. The state totals for these states were estimated by the FBI: Florida (1988), Illinois (1993–1998), Iowa (1991), Kansas (1993–1998), Kentucky (1988, 1996–1998), Montana (1994–1998), New Hampshire (1997–1998), Pennsylvania (1995), Vermont (1997), and Wisconsin (1998). In addition, the state totals for rape were estimated for Illinois (1985–1996), Michigan (1993, 1995), and Minnesota (1993, 1995). Delaware data were provided by the state Statistical Analysis Center.

### Law Enforcement Agency Employees

*Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1991, 1995, 1998.

The UCR program collects information from reporting law enforcement agencies on the number of agency employees each year. Since the number of agencies reporting within a state may vary from year to year, the changes in number of agency employees will result, in part, from these differences in the number of reporting agencies. Delaware data were provided by the state Statistical Analysis Center.

### Juvenile Arrests for Violent, Weapons and Drug Offenses

*Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1991–1998.

Due to various reporting problems as well as the conversion of some states to the National Incident-Based Reporting System, little or no arrest data were reported to UCR for some states in some years. The following states reported either incomplete or no arrest data: District of Columbia (1996–1998), Florida (1991, 1996–1997), Illinois (1993–1998), Iowa (1991), Kansas (1993–1998), Kentucky (1996–1998), Montana (1994–1998), New Hampshire (1995, 1997–1998), Pennsylvania (1995), Vermont (1996–1997), and Wisconsin (1998). The average of the previous and subsequent years was used to estimate missing data points when possible. Data for the District of Columbia, Delaware, Illinois, Montana, New York, and Pennsylvania were obtained from the states' Statistical Analysis Centers. Data for Kansas were obtained from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

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### **New Court Commitments, Conditional and Unconditional Releases**

*Prisoners in State and Federal Institutions*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1980–1984.

*Correctional Populations in the United States*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1985–1996.

The data are based on prisoner transactions in the course of each calendar year. The data are collected through a standardized questionnaire to each state. States vary in terms of definitions and administrative practices, making it difficult to compare rates across states. “New court commitments” are defined as inmates committed for new sentences only; this includes probation violators, but not parole violators. “Conditional releases” include inmates released on probation, parole, supervised mandatory release, or any other form of conditional release. “Unconditional releases” include inmates released due to expiration or commutation of sentence, or any other form of unconditional release.

### **Probationers, Prisoners, and Parolees**

*Prisoners in State and Federal Institutions, 1982*, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

*Correctional Populations in the United States, 1990*, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

*Prisoners in 1998*, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Note: Delaware data were provided by the state Statistical Analysis Center.

The data represent year-end counts obtained from questionnaires to each state. States vary in terms of definitions and administrative practices, making it difficult to compare rates across states.

### **Statistical Profile**

U.S. Census Bureau [Web site: [www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/statepop.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/statepop.html)].

Population increase.

*Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1999*, U.S. Census Bureau.

Estimated population, percentage of population living in a metropolitan area, percentage of population 65 years of age and older, and median household income.

*Juvenile Offenders and Victims, 1999: National Report*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Projected juvenile population increase.

*Justice Expenditure and Employment in the United States, 1995*, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

State and local justice system expenditures.

*Correctional Populations in the United States, 1995*, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Staff of state correctional facilities.