



# **Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S.**

## **by Thomas P. Bonczar**

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Statistics Special Report

Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001

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By Thomas P. Bonczar

BJS Statistician

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## Highlights

+At yearend 2001 over 5.6 million U.S. adults had ever served time in State  
or Federal prison+

\* Of adults in 2001 who had ever served time in prison, nearly as many  
were black (2,166,000) as were white (2,203,000). An estimated 997,000  
were Hispanic.

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+At yearend 2001, over 5.6 million U.S. residents had ever served time in  
State or Federal prison+

U.S. residents Percent of adult ever incarcerated Number U.S. residents

1974 1991 2001 1974 1991 2001

Total 1,819,000 3,437,000 5,618,000 1.3% 1.8% 2.7%

Male 1,677,000 3,142,000 5,037,000 2.3 3.4 4.9 White 837,000 1,395,000  
1,978,000 1.4 1.9 2.6 Black 595,000 1,181,000 1,936,000 8.7 12.0 16.6  
Hispanic 94,000 392,000 911,000 2.3 4.9 7.7

Female 142,000 295,000 581,000 0.2% 0.3% 0.5% White 86,000 139,000  
225,000 0.1 0.2 0.3 Black 51,000 109,000 231,000 0.6 0.9 1.7 Hispanic  
8,000 30,000 86,000 0.2 0.4 0.7

White 922,000 1,533,000 2,203,000 0.8% 1.1% 1.4% Black 646,000  
1,290,000 2,166,000 4.5 6.2 8.9 Hispanic 102,000 422,000 997,000 1.3 2.7  
4.3

U.S. adult resident population

1974 1991 2001

Total 145,356,000 187,982,751 210,207,901

Male 69,217,000 90,362,099 101,492,258 White 57,704,209 69,718,665  
74,217,435 Black 6,593,640 9,465,170 11,287,707 Hispanic 3,923,600  
8,022,134 11,452,968

Female 76,133,000 97,620,652 108,715,643 White 63,173,779 75,415,364  
78,956,773 Black 7,813,782 11,222,468 13,178,900 Hispanic 4,074,628  
7,655,854 11,496,534

White 120,878,496 145,134,029 153,174,207 Black 14,406,407 20,687,638  
24,466,606 Hispanic 7,998,062 15,677,988 22,949,502

Note: Because of estimation and other rounding procedures, some detail may not add to totals and may not match precisely totals in other tables.

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\* The rate of ever having gone to prison among adult black males(16.6%) was over twice as high as among adult Hispanic males (7.7%) and over 6 times as high as among adult white males (2.6%).

\* U.S. residents ages 35 to 39 in 2001 were more likely to have gone to prison (3.8%) than any other age group, up from 2.3% in 1991.

\* An estimated 22% of black males ages 35 to 44 in 2001 had ever been confined in State or Federal prison, compared to 10.0% of Hispanic males and 3.5% of white males in the same age group.

+If incarceration rates remain unchanged, 6.6% of U.S. residents born in 2001 will go to prison at some time during their lifetime+

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+If incarceration rates remain unchanged, 6.6% of U.S. residents born in 2001 will go to prison at some time during their lifetime+

Percent ever going to prison during lifetime, born in-- 1974 1991 2001  
Total 1.9% 5.2% 6.6%

Male 3.6 9.1 11.3 White 2.2 4.4 5.9 Black 13.4 29.4 32.2 Hispanic 4.0 16.3 17.2

Female 0.3% 1.1% 1.8% White 0.2 0.5 0.9 Black 1.1 3.6 5.6 Hispanic 0.4 1.5 2.2

White 1.2% 2.5% 3.4% Black 7.0 16.5 18.6 Hispanic 2.2 9.5 10.0

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\* About 1 in 3 black males, 1 in 6 Hispanic males, and 1 in 17 white males are expected to go to prison during their lifetime, if current incarceration rates remain unchanged.

\* For women, the chances of going to prison were 6 times greater in 2001 (1.8%) than in 1974 (0.3%); for men, the chances of going to prison were over 3 times greater in 2001 (11.3%) than in 1974 (3.6%).

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At yearend 2001 there were 1,319,000 adults confined in State or Federal prison and an estimated 4,299,000 living former prisoners. A total of 5,618,000 U.S. adult residents, or about 1 in every 37 U.S. adults, had ever served time in prison. Estimates of the prevalence of imprisonment in the U.S. population, presented here for the first time, are based on a demographic model incorporating rates of mortality and first incarceration in prison.

Between 1974 and 2001, the prevalence of imprisonment increased by nearly 3.8 million. This included a 1.1 million increase in the number of adults in prison (up from 216,000) and a nearly 2.7 million increase in the number of living former prisoners (up from 1,603,000).

If rates of first incarceration remain unchanged, 6.6% of all persons born in the United States in 2001 will go to State or Federal prison during their lifetime, up from 5.2% in 1991, and 1.9% in 1974. Unlike the prevalence of ever having gone to prison, which estimates the extent of past experiences, the lifetime likelihood of going to prison is an estimate of the chances of future incarceration, given unchanged rates of first incarceration and mortality.

+4.3 million U.S. residents in 2001 were former prisoners+

Of the estimated 5.6 million adults in the United States who had been incarcerated in State or Federal prison at some time before yearend 2001, nearly 4.3 million were no longer in prison (table 1). Former prisoners

accounted for 77% of all adult residents who had ever been confined in prison.

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+Table 1. Prevalence of incarceration in a State or Federal prison, by current and former prisoners, 1974-2001+

Current and former prisoners ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison--

1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Number incarcerated

Total	1,819,000	2,100,000	2,667,000	3,437,000	4,652,000	5,618,000
Current	216,000	302,000	524,000	788,000	1,171,000	1,319,000
Former	1,603,000	1,798,000	2,143,000	2,649,000	3,481,000	4,299,000

Ever incarcerated rate\*

Total	1,251	1,308	1,516	1,828	2,336	2,673
Current	149	188	298	419	588	628
Former	1,102	1,120	1,218	1,409	1,748	2,045

Note: Numbers of current adult prisoners from National Prisoner Statistics data series. Former prisoner statistics based on inmate survey data. Estimates were rounded to the nearest 1,000. See *Methodology* for estimation procedures.

\*The number ever incarcerated per 100,000 adult U.S. residents.

U.S. adult resident population

1974 1986 1991 1997 2001

145,356,000	175,886,630	187,982,751	199,121,734	210,207,901
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Persons ages 35 to 44 comprised the largest age group, accounting for 3 out of 10 former prisoners at yearend 2001 (1,280,000). Former prisoners were older than those currently in State or Federal prison, with 49% of former prisoners age 45 or older compared to 13% of persons confined on December 31, 2001. Current prisoners outnumbered former prisoners only among those ages 18 to 24 (254,000 compared with 155,000).

Number of adults with prison experience, 2001

Former Current Age inmates inmates

Total	4,299,000	1,319,000	18-24	155,000	254,000	25-34	775,000	511,000
35-44	1,280,000	385,000	45-54	1,002,000	130,000	55-64	509,000	30,000
65 or older	578,000	9,000						

Note: See *Methodology* for estimation procedures.

+More than two-thirds of former prisoners no longer under correctional supervision+

At yearend 2001 former prisoners included 731,147 persons on parole, an estimated 437,000 persons on probation who had either served part of their current sentence in prison or been confined in prison on a previous sentence, and an estimated 166,000 jail inmates who had served a previous sentence in prison. An estimated 3 million former prisoners were no longer under correctional supervision as of yearend 2001.

Former State and Federal prisoners, 2001

## Number Percent

Total 4,299,000 100.0%

Under supervision 1,334,000 31.0 Parole 731,000 17.0 Probation 437,000 10.2 Jail 166,000 3.9

Not under supervision 2,965,000 69.0

Note: Estimates rounded to nearest 1,000.

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### +Demographic techniques used to create prevalence estimates+

Estimates of the prevalence of ever having gone to prison were derived from generation life table techniques. The prevalence of ever having gone to prison includes adults currently in prison and living former prisoners.

One-day counts of the number of adults in prison are available through the National Prisoner Statistics program (NPS). Collected annually since 1926, the NPS provides a count at yearend of persons held in Federal and State prisons.

To obtain the number of persons who had ever gone to prison, separate generation life tables were prepared for persons alive between 1974 and 2001. These tables model the first incarceration and mortality experience of each birth cohort as it proceeded through life. Estimates were made of the number of persons going to prison for the first time, by year of age, and the number who had been incarcerated and survived to each later age.

Rates of first incarceration during a 12-month period were developed from prison inmate surveys conducted in 1974, 1979, 1986, 1991, and 1997, a period during which admission rates increased after many years of relative



stability.

Prevalence estimates for selected calendar years represent a sum of the contribution of each birth cohort to the total number of adults alive who had ever gone to prison. The number of former prisoners was obtained by subtracting the number of prisoners at yearend (NPS) from the total.

Estimates exclude admissions to local jails, due to the absence of data needed to calculate first admissions to jail. (See Methodology for estimation procedures and limitations.)

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+1 in 37 adult U.S. residents in 2001 had ever served time in prison+

The 5.6 million adult U.S. residents who were current and former prisoners, represented an increase of 3.8 million since 1974. At yearend 2001, 2,673 persons per 100,000 adult U.S. residents had ever gone to prison, up from 1,251 per 100,000 adult residents in 1974. Overall, approximately 1 in 37 adult residents in 2001 had ever served time in a State or Federal prison.

As a percent of all adults who had ever gone to a State or Federal prison, the number of former prisoners has steadily declined (from 88% in 1974 to 77% in 2001). The decline occurred as the number of adults confined in prison at yearend grew by 1.1 million -- a 6-fold increase. Over the 27-year period the number of adult prison inmates rose from 216,000 to 1,319,000. By yearend 2001, there were 628 prison inmates per 100,000 adult residents, up from 149 in 1974.

Between 1974 and 2001 the number of former prisoners living in the United States more than doubled, from 1,603,000 to 4,299,000. Relative to the adult population, the number of former prisoners totaled 2,045 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents in 2001, up from 1,102 per 100,000 in 1974. At yearend 2001, 1 in every 49 adults in the United States was a former prisoner.

+Two-thirds of the increase in number ever incarcerated due to rise in first incarceration rates+

Nearly two-thirds of the 3.8 million increase in the number of adults ever incarcerated in prison between 1974 and 2001 occurred as a result of an increase in the rates of first incarceration. In 1974 the number of persons admitted to prison for the first time totaled 44 per 100,000 adult residents. By 2001 the rate had nearly tripled, reaching 129 first admissions per 100,000 adults.

Over 40% of the total increase in first incarceration rates occurred between 1986 and 1991. First incarceration rates increased from 73 per 100,000 in 1986 to 111 in 1991.

About a third of the 3.8 million increase in the number ever incarcerated occurred as a result of growth in the U.S. resident population. Based on estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of residents 18 and older increased from 145 million in 1974 to 210 million in 2001. Had the rates of first incarceration remained stable at 1974 levels, the number of adults who had ever gone to prison would have increased by an estimated 1.3 million.

In every year, the rates of first incarceration varied by age (figure 1). In 2001 sharply higher first incarceration rates were found for each older birth cohort up to a peak of 350 per 100,000 at age 20. These rates then dropped steadily with each older age category.

[Illustration: Figure 1: First incarceration rates]

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Figure 1

+First incarceration rates rose sharply among persons under age 45+

Number first incarcerated per 100,000 U.S. residents.\*

## Age at first incarceration 1974 1986 1991 2001

12 0 0 0 0 13 0 0 1 0 14 1 0 6 0 15 6 8 27 12 16 25 29 67 58 17 66 81 139  
 152 18 107 143 219 254 19 142 203 295 325 20 140 217 307 350 21 143  
 209 306 344 22 133 188 274 329 23 132 172 285 304 24 113 164 261 285  
 25 92 153 254 280 26 81 142 227 274 27 79 128 224 282 28 79 116 210  
 262 29 68 116 189 268 30 55 112 179 244 31 45 107 164 243 32 40 93 148  
 217 33 38 87 123 206 34 36 82 120 196 35 38 78 125 198 36 36 74 126  
 195 37 34 68 114 177 38 28 64 103 153 39 23 56 92 129 40 21 50 83 123  
 41 18 43 75 116 42 18 38 63 122 43 16 42 56 114 44 15 41 48 98 45 13 41  
 46 77 46 12 34 44 65 47 12 33 45 58 48 11 35 46 53 49 10 28 44 43 50 10  
 26 35 42 51 8 15 27 42 52 9 16 25 41 53 7 12 27 36 54 7 16 30 28 55 8 15  
 33 25 56 7 14 28 21 57 6 10 25 18 58 4 9 19 17 59 4 9 19 16 60 2 7 15 15  
 61 2 5 10 16 62 3 5 12 19 63 3 7 12 15 64 4 7 11 11 65 3 5 5 4 66 2 2 4 2  
 67 2 2 3 3 68 3 5 3 4 69 2 4 5 5 70 2 3 7 5 71 2 2 7 6 72 2 2 4 4 73 1 2 3 1  
 74 0 0 2 0 75 0 0 4 0 76 0 0 2 3 77 0 0 2 3 78 0 0 2 3 79 0 0 5 0 80 0 0 5 0

\*The number first incarcerated at each age divided by the number at risk to first incarceration, times 100,000.

Note: 3-year averages were used to smooth age-specific rates.

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Between 1974 and 2001 the rate of first incarceration rose in nearly every age-specific category. The largest increases occurred among younger age cohorts -- those that already had high first incarceration rates. The peak incarceration rate increased by over 200 persons per 100,000 (from 143 at age 21 in 1974, to 350 at age 20 in 2001). Rates increased even among persons age 45 or older.

+In 2001, 3 out of 10 adults ever incarcerated were age 35 to 44+

Persons between ages 35 and 44 accounted for the largest number of current and former prisoners at yearend 2001 (table 2). Born between 1957 and 1966, these persons turned 18 in the late 1970s and early 1980s when

first incarceration rates began to climb. Between 1974 and 2001, the number ever incarcerated in this age group rose from 324,000 to 1.67 million.

Among persons between ages 25 and 34, the number ever incarcerated nearly quadrupled (from 343,000 in 1974 to 1.29 million in 2001). While persons in this age group also experienced rising first incarceration rates, they were subject to these rates for a smaller portion of their lifespan than those ages 35 to 44.

As a percent of those ever incarcerated, persons ages 35 to 44 increased from 18% in 1974 to 30% by 2001; persons age 25 to 34 increased from 19% in 1974 to 23% in 2001.

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+Table 1. Prevalence of incarceration in a State or Federal prison, by current and former prisoners, 1974-2001+

Current and former prisoners ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison--

1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Number incarcerated

Total 1,819,000 2,100,000 2,667,000 3,437,000 4,652,000 5,618,000

Current 216,000 302,000 524,000 788,000 1,171,000 1,319,000 Former  
1,603,000 1,798,000 2,143,000 2,649,000 3,481,000 4,299,000

Ever incarcerated rate\*

Total 1,251 1,308 1,516 1,828 2,336 2,673 Current 149 188 298 419 588  
628 Former 1,102 1,120 1,218 1,409 1,748 2,045

\*The number ever incarcerated per 100,000 adult U.S. residents.

## U.S. adult resident population

145,356,000 175,886,630 187,982,751 199,121,734 210,207,901

+Prevalence rates up sharply among persons under age 50+

Between 1974 and 2001, the rise in first incarceration rates had the largest effects on younger age groups. The percent of persons ever incarcerated tripled among persons ages 25 to 29 (from 1.0% in 1974 to 3.1% in 2001) and more than doubled among persons ages 30 to 34 (from 1.3% to 3.7%) and persons ages 35 to 39 (from 1.4% to 3.8%) (table 3).

+Table 3. Percent of adult population ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by age, 1974-2001+

### Percent of adult population ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison

Age 1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Total	1.3%	1.3%	1.5%	1.8%	2.3%	2.7%	18-19	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	20-24	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.8	1.8	25-29	1.0	1.2	1.6	2.1	2.7	3.1	30-34	1.3	1.3	1.8	2.3	3.2	3.7	35-39	1.4	1.4	1.7	2.3	3.1	3.8	40-44	1.5	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.9	3.6	45-49	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.5	3.2	50-54	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.2	2.6	55-59	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.2
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60-64 1.5 1.5 1.6 1.6 1.9 2.0 65 or older 1.5 1.5 1.5 1.6 1.6 1.7

Note: Percents by age were based on intercensal resident population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. See *Methodology* for data sources.

### U.S. adult resident population

1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Total	145,356,000	160,463,000	175,886,630	187,982,751	199,121,734	
210,207,901	18-19	8,196,000	8,698,000	7,571,080	7,562,252	7,629,647
8,349,428	20-24	18,757,000	21,096,000	21,147,811	19,756,380	18,078,783
19,863,153	25-29	16,429,000	19,078,000	21,742,173	21,509,229	
19,529,293	18,057,849	30-34	13,644,000	16,960,000	20,167,953	
22,482,213	21,434,194	19,971,052	35-39	11,400,000	13,591,000	
17,839,473	20,486,038	22,851,041	21,801,103	40-44	11,355,000	
11,522,000	14,185,094	18,553,907	21,376,552	23,144,035	45-49	
11,843,000	11,211,000	11,658,854	14,135,160	18,558,879	20,879,652	
50-54	11,958,000	11,725,000	10,868,729	11,410,881	14,518,458	
18,117,187	55-59	10,386,000	11,582,000	11,210,396	10,345,736	
11,434,732	14,092,339	60-64	9,327,000	9,867,000	10,902,949	10,518,068
9,913,280	11,049,281	65 or older	22,061,000	25,133,000	28,592,118	
31,222,887	33,796,875	34,882,826				

Note: Because of estimation and other rounding procedures, some detail may not add to totals and may not match precisely totals in other tables.

In contrast, the rise in the percents ever incarcerated was more modest among persons 50 or older. Although these age groups also experienced rising first incarceration rates, they were exposed at older ages when first incarceration rates are low. Persons age 65 and older were the least affected by the increases in first incarceration rates, with percents ever incarcerated rising from 1.5% in 1974 to 1.7% in 2001.

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+Table 4. Number of adults ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by gender, race, and Hispanic origin, 1974-2001+

Number of adults ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison

1974	1979	1986	1991	1997	2001	Gender Male	1,677,000	1,934,000
2,449,000	3,142,000	4,205,000	5,037,000	Female	142,000	165,000		
217,000	295,000	447,000	581,000					

Race/Hispanic origin White*	922,000	1,052,000	1,286,000	1,533,000
1,909,000	2,203,000	Male	837,000	958,000
1,978,000	Female	86,000	94,000	113,000
		139,000	185,000	225,000

Black*	646,000	766,000	963,000	1,290,000	1,784,000	2,166,000	Male
595,000	704,000	881,000	1,181,000	1,615,000	1,936,000	Female	51,000
62,000	82,000	109,000	170,000	231,000			

Hispanic	102,000	125,000	234,000	422,000	721,000	997,000	Male	94,000
116,000	217,000	392,000	664,000	911,000	Female	8,000	10,000	17,000
30,000	57,000	86,000						

Note: Estimates were based on separate generation life tables that incorporate first incarceration and mortality rates for each age group. Estimates were rounded to the nearest 1,000. See *Methodology* for estimation procedures.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

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These changes in the percents ever incarcerated by age reflect rising rates of first incarceration and the age of each of these birth cohorts when the increases occurred. In the future, the percents ever incarcerated will rise among older age groups as more recent cohorts experience the full impact

of current levels of first incarceration rates throughout their lifetimes (figure 2).

[Illustration: Figure 2: Younger age groups experience rising rates of imprisonment]

Figure 2

+Younger age groups experience rising rates of imprisonment+

Percent ever incarcerated

Age 1974 1986 1991 2001

15	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	17	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	18	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	19	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.8	20	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.1	21	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.5	22	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.8	23	0.8	1.2	1.5	2.2	24	0.9	1.3	1.7	2.4	25	0.9	1.4	1.8	2.7	26	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.9	27	1.1	1.6	2.1	3.1	28	1.1	1.6	2.2	3.3	29	1.2	1.7	2.2	3.4	30	1.2	1.7	2.3	3.5	31	1.2	1.8	2.3	3.6	32	1.3	1.8	2.3	3.7	33	1.3	1.8	2.3	3.8	34	1.3	1.8	2.3	3.8	35	1.3	1.8	2.3	3.9	36	1.4	1.8	2.3	3.9	37	1.4	1.7	2.3	3.9	38	1.4	1.7	2.3	3.8	39	1.4	1.7	2.2	3.8	40	1.4	1.7	2.2	3.7	41	1.5	1.7	2.1	3.6	42	1.5	1.7	2.1	3.6	43	1.5	1.7	2.0	3.5	44	1.5	1.7	2.0	3.4	45	1.5	1.7	1.9	3.4	46	1.5	1.7	1.9	3.3	47	1.5	1.7	1.9	3.2	48	1.5	1.7	1.9	3.1	49	1.5	1.7	1.9	3.0	50	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.8	51	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.7	52	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.6	53	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.5	54	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.4	55	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.3	56	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.3	57	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.2	58	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.2	59	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	60	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	61	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.0	62	1.5	1.6	1.6	2.0	63	1.5	1.6	1.6	2.0	64	1.5	1.6	1.6	2.0	65	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.9	66	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.9	67	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.8	68	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.8	69	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.8	70	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	71	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	72	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	73	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	74	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	75	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6
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+More males than females and more blacks and Hispanics than whites had ever served time in prison+



Nearly 9 times as many men (5,037,000) as women (581,000) had ever been incarcerated in a State or Federal prison at yearend 2001. As a percentage of all persons ever confined in prison, women increased from 7.8% in 1974 to 10.3% in 2001.

At yearend 2001 nearly as many blacks (2,166,000) as whites (2,203,000) had ever served time in prison; Hispanics numbered about half of either group (997,000). Together, blacks (39%) and Hispanics (18%) constituted a majority of those who had ever served time in prison in 2001. Whites accounted for 39% of all those ever incarcerated in 2001, down from 51% in 1974.

Over the 27-year period, the share of those who are black and Hispanic among persons ever incarcerated increased. The number of Hispanics rose nearly 10-fold (up from 102,000 in 1974) and the number of blacks more than tripled (up from 646,000), while the number of whites more than doubled (up from 922,000). As a result, blacks rose from 36% to 39% of all persons ever incarcerated, while Hispanics rose from 6% to 18%.

+Nearly 17% of adult black males had ever served time in prison+

In 2001 an estimated 16.6% of adult black males were current or former State or Federal prisoners -- a rate that was twice that of Hispanic males (7.7%), and 6 times that of white males (2.6%) (table 5).

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+Table 5. Percent of adult population ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by gender, race, and Hispanic origin, 1974-2001+

Percent of adult population ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison

1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Gender Male 2.3% 2.4% 2.8% 3.4% 4.3% 4.9% Female 0.2 0.2 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5

Race/Hispanic origin White\* 0.8% 0.8% 0.9% 1.1% 1.3% 1.4% Male 1.4  
1.5 1.7 1.9 2.3 2.6 Female 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.2 0.2 0.3

Black\* 4.5% 4.6% 5.2% 6.2% 7.9% 8.9% Male 8.7 8.9 9.9 12.0 15.0 16.6  
Female 0.6 0.7 0.8 0.9 1.3 1.7

Hispanic 1.3% 1.4% 2.0% 2.7% 3.8% 4.3% Male 2.3 2.6 3.6 4.9 6.7 7.7  
Female 0.2 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.6 0.7

Note: Percents were based on intercensal resident population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. See *Methodology* for data sources.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

U.S. adult resident population

1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Gender Male 69,217,000 76,388,000 83,973,550 90,362,099 95,948,130  
101,492,258 Female 76,133,000 84,072,000 91,913,080 97,620,652  
103,173,604 108,715,643

Race/Hispanic origin White\* 120,878,496 132,166,671 140,455,378  
145,134,029 149,184,485 153,174,207 Male 57,704,209 63,114,508  
67,150,845 69,718,665 71,989,995 74,217,435 Female 63,173,779  
69,055,203 73,304,533 75,415,364 77,194,490 78,956,773

Black\* 14,406,407 16,544,671 18,682,074 20,687,638 22,627,733  
24,466,606 Male 6,593,640 7,543,858 8,517,413 9,465,170 10,401,742  
11,287,707 Female 7,813,782 8,999,844 10,164,661 11,222,468  
12,225,991 13,178,900

Hispanic 7,998,062 8,854,010 11,956,854 15,677,988 19,181,910  
22,949,502 Male 3,923,600 4,353,052 6,003,930 8,022,134 9,674,049  
11,452,968 Female 4,074,628 4,500,532 5,952,924 7,655,854 9,507,861  
11,496,534

Note: Because of estimation and other rounding procedures, some detail may not add to totals and may not match precisely totals in other tables.

Female rates, though significantly lower, reveal similar racial and ethnic disparities. Adult black females were nearly 2 1/2 times more likely than adult Hispanic females and 5 1/2 times more likely than adult white females to have ever served time in State or Federal prison.

Among adult residents in 2001, an estimated 1.7% of black females, 0.7% of Hispanic females and 0.3% of white females had ever been incarcerated in a prison.

Among both men and women who had ever been confined in prison in 2001, blacks outnumbered whites in each age category under age 45; whites outnumbered blacks in nearly every age category 45 or older (table 6). The percentage of blacks declined steadily among each older age group (dropping from 44% among those ages 18 to 24 to 29% among persons 65 or older). The percentage of Hispanics also declined among older age groups (dropping from 24% among those ages 18 to 24 to 8% among those age 65 or older). In contrast, at yearend 2001 the percentage white among all adults ever incarcerated increased from 27% of those ages 18 to 24 to 52% among persons age 65 or older.

+Table 6. Number ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by gender, race, Hispanic origin, and age, 2001+

Number of adults ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by age--

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 or older

Gender Male	385,000	1,157,000	1,460,000	1,014,000	492,000	529,000
Female	24,000	129,000	205,000	118,000	47,000	59,000

Race/Hispanic origin White\* 112,000 391,000 628,000 497,000 271,000  
304,000 Male 104,000 351,000 555,000 452,000 248,000 269,000 Female  
8,000 41,000 73,000 45,000 23,000 35,000

Black\* 181,000 567,000 681,000 406,000 162,000 169,000 Male 172,000  
509,000 597,000 361,000 146,000 151,000 Female 9,000 58,000 84,000  
45,000 16,000 18,000

Hispanic 99,000 295,000 309,000 181,000 69,000 46,000 Male 93,000  
271,000 279,000 165,000 63,000 41,000 Female 6,000 24,000 3,000  
16,000 6,000 5,000

Note: Estimates were rounded to the nearest 1,000. See *Methodology* for estimation procedures."

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

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+Regardless of gender, race or Hispanic origin, prevalence rates highest among persons age 35 to 44+

Although there was wide variation by race, Hispanic origin, and gender, within each subgroup, persons ages 35 to 44 had the highest percents ever incarcerated in 2001. Among men, the percent ever incarcerated rose for each age group to a peak of 6.5% of those ages 35 to 44 and then declined to 3.1% of those age 65 or older (table 7).

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+Table 7. Percent of adult population ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by gender, race, Hispanic origin, and age, 2001+

Percent of adult population ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by age--"

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 or older

Gender Male 2.7% 6.0% 6.5% 5.3% 4.0% 3.1% Female 0.2 0.7 0.9 0.6 0.3 0.2

Race/Hispanic origin White\* 0.6% 1.6% 2.0% 1.7% 1.4% 1.1% Male 1.1 2.8 3.5 3.1 2.5 2.0 Female 0.1 0.3 0.5 0.3 0.2 0.2

Black\* 4.4% 10.9% 12.1% 9.5% 6.7% 5.9% Male 8.5 20.4 22.0 17.7 13.0 11.6 Female 0.4 2.1 2.8 1.9 1.1 0.9

Hispanic 2.2% 5.1% 5.8% 5.2% 3.6% 2.2% Male 4.0 9.0 10.0 9.5 6.6 4.1 Female 0.3 0.8 1.1 0.9 0.6 0.3

Note: Percents were based on intercensal resident population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. See *Methodology* for data sources.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

U.S. adult resident population, 2001

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 or older

Gender Male 14,417,325 8,939,186 22,389,203 19,117,478 12,022,028 14,607,040 Female 13,795,256 19,089,714 22,555,935 19,879,361 13,119,592 20,275,786

Race/Hispanic origin White\* 18,303,498 24,885,780 31,782,158 29,517,823 19,800,209 28,884,741 Male 9,375,574 12,489,397 15,944,122 14,647,562 9,615,049 12,145,733 Female 8,927,925 12,396,383 15,838,036 14,870,261 10,185,160 16,739,009

Black\* 4,076,908 5,196,820 5,624,914 4,297,967 2,409,671 2,860,327 Male 2,008,858 2,472,112 2,666,839 1,963,452 1,043,119 1,133,328 Female 2,068,051 2,724,708 2,958,076 2,334,515 1,366,552 1,726,999

Hispanic 4,394,592 5,737,009 5,334,091 3,448,416 1,936,521 2,098,875  
 Male 2,299,849 2,940,171 2,734,938 1,696,233 896,361 885,418 Female  
 2,094,743 2,796,838 2,599,153 1,752,183 1,040,160 1,213,457

Note: Because of estimation and other rounding procedures, some detail may not add to totals and may not match precisely totals in other tables.

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There was a similar pattern among women, though the percents were lower than for men. An estimated 0.9% of women ages 35 to 44 had ever been in prison, compared to 0.2% for women ages 18 to 24 and age 65 or older.

When rates were estimated separately by race and Hispanic origin, the variations among age groups remained unchanged. In every gender and racial/ethnic group in 2001, the percent of ever having been incarcerated was lowest among the youngest group (those ages 18 to 24) and the oldest age group (age 65 or older).

Among persons ages 35 to 44, more than 22.0% of black males had ever been incarcerated in prison, over twice as high as Hispanic males (10.0%), and over 6 times higher than white males (3.5%). In this same age group, black women (2.8%) were over twice as likely as Hispanic women (1.1%), and nearly 6 times as likely as white women (0.5%) to have been in prison.

+Impact of rising first incarceration rate varies by birth cohort+

Persons born prior to 1940 were nearly unaffected by the rising first incarceration rates of the 1980's and 1990's. At younger ages (up to the age of 40), the prevalence rates at 5-year age intervals were the same for persons born in 1935 as in 1910 (table 8). The rising rates of first incarceration increased the prevalence of incarceration among those born in 1935 as they reached age 45. Similarly, the prevalence rates rose for those born in 1930 as they reached age 50.

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+Table 8. Percent of adults ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by year of birth and age+

Percent of adults ever incarcerated in a State or Federal prison, by age--

Year born 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75

1910	0.4%	0.9%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	0.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
1915	0.4	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1920 0.4 0.9 1.2 1.3 1.4
1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1925	0.4	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.4 1.5 1.5 1.6 1.6 1.6 1.6
1.6	1930	0.4	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7 +1.7+ 1935 0.4 0.9 1.2
1.3	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	+1.9	1.9+	1940	0.4	0.9	1.2 1.3 1.5 1.7 1.8 2.0 2.0
+2.1	2.1	2.1+	1945	0.4	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.3	+2.3 2.4 2.4 2.4+ 1950
0.4	1.0	1.4	1.7	2.1	2.4	2.7	+2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9+	1955 0.5 1.1 1.7 2.2 2.7 3.2
+3.4	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7+	1960	0.6	1.4	2.1	2.9	3.5 +4.0 4.3 4.4 4.4 4.5 4.5
4.5+	1965	0.7	1.7	2.8	3.7	+4.4	4.9	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.4 5.4+ 1970 0.9 2.2 3.4
+4.4	5.1	5.6	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0+	1975	1.1	2.6	+3.9 4.9 5.7 6.1 6.4 6.5
6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5+	1980	1.2	+2.7	4.0	5.0	5.7	6.2	6.4	6.5 6.6 6.6 6.6 6.6+

Note: Based on constant age-specific first incarceration rates after 2001 (bolded type--indicated with plus (+) signs).

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Among persons born after 1935, the effects of rising first incarceration rates occurred at increasingly younger ages. Persons born in 1955 were the first to record higher prevalence rates at all ages, compared to persons born in prior years. At age 45 the percent ever having been in prison reached 3.2% for persons born in 1955 -- more than double the percent at that age among persons born in 1930 or earlier.

The greatest rise occurred in the percents having been incarcerated among the most recent cohorts. For persons born in 1975, 2.6% had been to prison by age 25, nearly equal to the percent among persons born in 1950 who had been to prison by age 50 (2.7%).

Projections for years after 2001 indicate the percent ever incarcerated will rise at an accelerated pace. If rates of first incarceration remain at 2001 levels, 5.4% of persons born in 1965 are expected to have gone to prison by age 75, more than three times the 1.7% of persons born in 1930.

The projected rise in the percent ever incarcerated slows among persons in later cohorts. Of those born in 1970, 6.0% are expected to have been in prison by age 75, compared to 6.5% of those born in 1975, and 6.6% of those born in 1980.

+3.4% of adults projected to have served time in prison by 2010+

The prevalence of having been to prison will rise among the U.S. adult population as more birth cohorts experience the full impact of current levels of first incarceration. Assuming that current age-specific rates of first incarceration remain at 2001 levels, the number of adults having ever served time in prison is projected to rise to 7.7 million by 2010. A total of 3.4% of the adult population (1 in 29 persons age 18 or older) is expected to have served time in prison.

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Projected prevalence of having gone to State or Federal prison\*

Year Number Percent

2001	5,618,000	2.7%	2002	5,856,000	2.8	2003	6,095,000	2.8	2004	6,332,000	2.9	2005	6,568,000	3.0	2006	6,804,000	3.1	2007	7,040,000	3.1	2008	7,275,000	3.2	2009	7,511,000	3.3	2010	7,745,000	3.4
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\*Based on prevalence estimates for exact ages through 2001 and projections for exact ages from 2002 through 2010. See *Methodology* for estimation procedures.

Projected adult Year resident population



2001 210,207,901 2002 212,427,944 2003 214,688,268 2004 216,918,713  
2005 219,144,044 2006 221,409,946 2007 223,754,193 2008 226,155,771  
2009 228,520,785 2010 230,792,746

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+Lifetime likelihood estimates of going to prison differ from current prevalence estimates+

The lifetime likelihood of going to prison is an estimate of the percentage of all persons in a birth cohort expected to go to prison over the course of a lifetime. In contrast, the prevalence of ever having gone to prison is an estimate of the percentage who have ever gone to prison among just the surviving members of all birth cohorts over a specific period.

Estimates of the lifetime likelihood of going to prison project the percentage of persons at birth expected to go to prison, if the entire cohort were subject to a fixed set of rates of first admission to prison and mortality over an entire lifetime. In calculating these estimates, incarceration and mortality rates are fixed at the time of "birth" of the cohort.

Standard life table techniques were used to prepare estimates of the lifetime likelihood of going to prison based on rates of first incarceration during a 12-month period derived from inmate surveys conducted in 1974, 1979, 1986, 1991, and 1997. (See Lifetime Likelihood of Going to State or Federal Prison, NCJ 160092, March 1997, for a description of previous estimates.)

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+6.6% of persons born in 2001 will go to prison, if current rates of first incarceration remain unchanged+

If rates of first incarceration and mortality in 2001 remain unchanged, nearly 1 in 15 persons born in 2001 (6.6%) will go to State or Federal prison during their lifetime (figure 3).

[Illustration: Figure 3: Lifetime chances of going to prison]

### Figure 3

+The lifetime chances of going to prison reached 6.6% in 2001, up from 1.9% in 1974+

Cumulative percent of U.S. residents going to prison

Age 1974 1986 1991 2001

13	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	17	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	18	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	19	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.8	20	0.5	0.7	1.1	1.1	21	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.5	22	0.7	1.1	1.6	1.8	23	0.9	1.2	1.9	2.1	24	1.0	1.4	2.1	2.4	25	1.1	1.5	2.4	2.6	26	1.1	1.7	2.6	2.9	27	1.2	1.8	2.8	3.1	28	1.3	1.9	3.0	3.4	29	1.4	2.0	3.2	3.6	30	1.4	2.1	3.3	3.9	31	1.5	2.2	3.5	4.1	32	1.5	2.3	3.6	4.3	33	1.5	2.4	3.7	4.5	34	1.6	2.5	3.9	4.7	35	1.6	2.5	4.0	4.9	36	1.6	2.6	4.1	5.1	37	1.7	2.7	4.2	5.2	38	1.7	2.7	4.3	5.4	39	1.7	2.8	4.4	5.5	40	1.7	2.8	4.5	5.6	41	1.7	2.9	4.5	5.7	42	1.8	2.9	4.6	5.8	43	1.8	2.9	4.6	5.9	44	1.8	3.0	4.7	6.0	45	1.8	3.0	4.7	6.1	46	1.8	3.0	4.7	6.1	47	1.8	3.1	4.8	6.2	48	1.8	3.1	4.8	6.2	49	1.8	3.1	4.9	6.2	50	1.8	3.1	4.9	6.3	51	1.9	3.2	4.9	6.3	52	1.9	3.2	4.9	6.4	53	1.9	3.2	5.0	6.4	54	1.9	3.2	5.0	6.4	55	1.9	3.2	5.0	6.4	56	1.9	3.2	5.0	6.4	57	1.9	3.2	5.1	6.5	58	1.9	3.2	5.1	6.5	59	1.9	3.2	5.1	6.5	60	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.5	61	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.5	62	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.5	63	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.5	64	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.5	65	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.6	66	1.9	3.3	5.1	6.6	67	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	68	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	69	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	70	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	71	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	72	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	73	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	74	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6	75	1.9	3.3	5.2	6.6
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Unlike the yearend 2001 prevalence rate of 2.7%, which represents the cumulative result of the past incarceration experiences of the living adult population, the lifetime likelihood is a hypothetical projection of the future if a birth cohort were to experience a fixed set of rates of first incarceration and mortality over a lifetime.

Between 1974 and 2001, the lifetime chances of going to State or Federal prison for U.S. residents overall increased from 1.9% to 6.6%. Each estimate summarized the effects of first incarceration and mortality during a 12-month period in 1974, 1986, 1991, and 2001. The estimates do not take into account changes in rates of first incarceration or mortality that occur after the "birth" of the hypothetical cohort. As a result of steadily rising rates of first incarceration from 1974 to 2001, the lifetime chances of going to prison for persons born in 1974 will be higher than 1.9%. Based on rates of first incarceration through 2001, an estimated 2.6% of persons born in 1975 had already been incarcerated by age 25.

+6 times higher lifetime chance of going to prison in 2001 for men than for women+

Based on rates of first incarceration in 2001, the lifetime chances for men of going to prison are 6 times greater than those for women (table 9). A male has a 11.3% (or 1 in 9) chance in his life-time of going to prison, while a female has a 1.8% (or 1 in 56) chance. An estimated 9.6% of men and 1.5% of women are expected to go to prison by age 40, as first incarceration rates rise rapidly, then decline with advancing age (figures 4 and 5).

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+Table 9. Lifetime chances of going to State or Federal prison for the first time, by gender, race, and Hispanic origin, 1974-2001+

Percent of resident population expected to go to State or Federal prison for the first time, by year--

1974 1979 1986 1991 1997 2001

Gender Male 3.6% 4.1% 6.0% 9.1% 10.6% 11.3% Female 0.3 0.4 0.6 1.1  
1.5 1.8

Race/Hispanic origin White\* 1.2% 1.4% 2.0% 2.5% 3.1 3.4% Male 2.2 2.5  
3.6 4.4 5.4 5.9 Female 0.2 0.2 0.3 0.5 0.7 0.9

Black\* 7.0% 7.2% 9.3% 16.5% 17.7 18.6% Male 13.4 13.4 17.4 29.4 31.0  
32.2 Female 1.1 1.4 1.8 3.6 4.9 5.6

Hispanic 2.2% 3.3% 6.2% 9.5% 10.5 10.0% Male 4.0 6.0 11.1 16.3 18.0  
17.2 Female 0.4 0.4 0.9 1.5 2.2 2.2

Note: Percents represent the chances of being admitted to State or Federal prison during a lifetime.

Estimates were obtained by applying age-specific first incarceration and mortality rates for each group to a hypothetical population of 100,000 births. See *Methodology*.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

[Illustration: Figure 4: Nearly 1 in 3 black males likely to go to prison]

Figure 4

+Nearly 1 in 3 black males likely to go to prison based on constant 2001 incarceration rates+

Cumulative percent of males going to prison

## Age Total White Black Hispanic

13 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 14 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 15 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 16 0.1 0.0 0.3 0.1 17  
0.3 0.1 1.3 0.3 18 0.8 0.3 3.0 1.0 19 1.4 0.5 4.9 2.1 20 2.1 0.8 6.7 3.0 21 2.7  
1.2 8.2 4.1 22 3.3 1.5 9.8 5.0 23 3.8 1.6 11.8 5.5 24 4.3 1.8 13.7 6.0 25 4.7  
2.1 15.1 6.7 26 5.2 2.3 16.9 7.2 27 5.6 2.5 18.0 7.9 28 6.1 2.8 19.3 8.6 29  
6.5 3.0 20.2 9.3 30 6.9 3.3 21.0 10.3 31 7.2 3.4 22.2 10.8 32 7.6 3.6 23.2  
11.0 33 7.9 3.8 23.8 11.5 34 8.1 4.0 24.5 12.0 35 8.4 4.1 25.2 12.5 36 8.7  
4.3 26.1 13.0 37 9.0 4.4 27.2 13.2 38 9.2 4.6 27.7 13.4 39 9.4 4.7 28.2 13.8  
40 9.6 4.7 28.6 14.1 41 9.7 4.9 29.1 14.4 42 9.9 5.0 29.5 14.8 43 10.1 5.1  
30.0 15.2 44 10.3 5.2 30.3 15.4 45 10.4 5.2 30.7 15.6 46 10.5 5.3 30.8 15.8  
47 10.6 5.3 31.1 15.9 48 10.6 5.4 31.2 15.9 49 10.7 5.5 31.3 16.1 50 10.7  
5.5 31.4 16.1 51 10.8 5.5 31.5 16.4 52 10.9 5.6 31.6 16.5 53 10.9 5.7 31.7  
16.6 54 11.0 5.7 31.8 16.7 55 11.0 5.7 31.9 16.8 56 11.0 5.7 32.0 16.8 57  
11.1 5.7 32.0 16.9 58 11.1 5.8 32.0 16.9 59 11.1 5.8 32.0 17.0 60 11.1 5.8  
32.0 17.1 61 11.2 5.8 32.1 17.1 62 11.2 5.8 32.2 17.1 63 11.2 5.8 32.2 17.1  
64 11.2 5.8 32.2 17.2 65 11.2 5.9 32.2 17.2 66 11.2 5.9 32.2 17.2 67 11.2  
5.9 32.2 17.2 68 11.2 5.9 32.2 17.2 69 11.2 5.9 32.2 17.2 70 11.2 5.9 32.2  
17.2 71 11.3 5.9 32.2 17.2 72 11.3 5.9 32.2 17.2 73 11.3 5.9 32.2 17.2 74  
11.3 5.9 32.2 17.2 75 11.3 5.9 32.2 17.2

-----  
[Illustration: Figure 5: 1 in 19 black females likely to go to prison]

## Figure 5

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+1 in 19 black females compared with 1 in 118 white females likely to go  
to prison+

Cumulative percent of females going to prison

Age Total White Black Hispanic

13 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 14 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 15 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 16 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 17  
 0.0 0.0 0.1 0.1 18 0.1 0.0 0.1 0.1 19 0.1 0.0 0.2 0.1 20 0.1 0.1 0.3 0.2 21 0.2  
 0.1 0.4 0.3 22 0.2 0.1 0.5 0.3 23 0.3 0.1 0.7 0.5 24 0.3 0.2 0.9 0.5 25 0.4 0.2  
 1.0 0.6 26 0.5 0.2 1.4 0.6 27 0.5 0.3 1.7 0.7 28 0.6 0.3 1.8 0.8 29 0.7 0.4 2.1  
 0.9 30 0.8 0.4 2.3 1.1 31 0.9 0.4 2.7 1.1 32 1.0 0.5 3.0 1.2 33 1.1 0.5 3.3 1.3  
 34 1.1 0.6 3.5 1.4 35 1.2 0.6 3.7 1.5 36 1.3 0.6 4.0 1.6 37 1.3 0.7 4.2 1.7 38  
 1.4 0.7 4.4 1.7 39 1.4 0.7 4.6 1.8 40 1.5 0.8 4.7 1.8 41 1.5 0.8 4.9 1.9 42 1.6  
 0.8 4.9 1.9 43 1.6 0.8 5.1 1.9 44 1.6 0.8 5.2 1.9 45 1.6 0.8 5.3 1.9 46 1.7 0.8  
 5.4 2.0 47 1.7 0.8 5.4 2.1 48 1.7 0.8 5.4 2.1 49 1.7 0.8 5.5 2.1 50 1.7 0.9 5.5  
 2.1 51 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.1 52 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.1 53 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.2 54 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.2  
 55 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.2 56 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.2 57 1.7 0.9 5.5 2.2 58 1.7 0.9 5.6 2.2 59  
 1.7 0.9 5.6 2.2 60 1.7 0.9 5.6 2.2 61 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 62 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 63 1.8  
 0.9 5.6 2.2 64 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 65 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 66 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 67 1.8 0.9  
 5.6 2.2 68 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 69 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 70 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 71 1.8 0.9 5.6  
 2.2 72 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 73 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 74 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2 75 1.8 0.9 5.6 2.2

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In 2001, the chances of going to prison were highest among black males (32.2%) and Hispanic males (17.2%) and lowest among white males (5.9%). The lifetime chances of going to prison among black females (5.6%) were nearly as high as for white males. Hispanic females (2.2%) and white females (0.9%) had much lower chances of going to prison.

As a result of changes in first incarceration and mortality rates between 1974 and 2001, black males experienced a greater increase in the chances of going to prison over the course of a lifetime than any other group (from 13.4% in 1974 to 32.2% in 2001). Hispanic males experienced the second largest increase (from 4.0% in 1974 to 17.2% in 2001). White males experienced a smaller increase (from 2.2% in 1974 to 5.9% in 2001).

The lifetime chances of going to prison increased more rapidly for black females (from 1.1% in 1974 to 5.6% in 2001) than for white males. Hispanic females (from 0.4% in 1974 to 2.2% in 2001) and white females (from 0.2% in 1974 to 0.9% in 2001) had smaller increases in their lifetime chances of going to prison.

At every age men have higher chances of going to prison than women, and blacks and Hispanics have higher chances than whites. Based on current rates of first incarceration, an estimated 6.7% of black males will enter State or Federal prison by the time they are age 20, compared to 3.0% of Hispanic males and 0.8% of white males.

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## +Methodology+

### *Life table techniques*

Life table techniques previously used to illustrate the implications of prevailing incarceration rates in 1991 have been extended to model the incarceration experience of actual generations of U.S. residents. (See Lifetime Likelihood of Going to State or Federal Prison, NCJ 160092, March 1997.) These generation life tables provide the data needed to estimate the number of living persons who have ever been incarcerated.

A generation life table traces a birth cohort of 100,000 persons through their entire lives, subjecting them to the observed age-specific mortality and incarceration rates which they encountered in each subsequent calendar year of life. The procedure is known as a double-decrement life table because there are two forms of exit from the initial 100,000 birth cohort. The procedure yields estimates of the number of persons in the birth cohort who are incarcerated for the first time each year or who die.

At each year of age, the estimated number of living persons ever incarcerated is equal to the number of persons identified as a prisoner for the first time that year plus the number of surviving members of the birth cohort who were prisoners in prior years. The age-specific prevalence rate for members of the birth cohort is obtained by dividing the surviving number of persons ever incarcerated by the number of members of the 100,000 birth cohort who have survived to the current age (including both those never incarcerated and those ever incarcerated).

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+Appendix table 1. Calculating the number of persons ever incarcerated in State or Federal prison, 2001+

Prevalence of ever going to prison, 2001

U.S. resident population, Year of Age in 2000[a] Percent[b] Number[c]  
birth 2001 (1) (2) (3)

1983-1901 18 or older 210,207,901 2.673 5618000

2001-1988 0-13 56,557,383 0.000 0 1987 14 4,063,179 0.000 0 1986 15  
4,071,585 0.000 0 1985 16 4,083,677 0.036 1,000 1984 17 4,117,221 0.174  
7,000 1983 18 4,022,021 0.453 18,000 1982 19 4,327,407 0.794 34,000  
1981 20 4,264,552 1.146 49,000 1980 21 4,140,721 1.510 63,000 1979 22  
3,935,452 1.845 73,000 1978 23 3,756,052 2.155 81,000 1977 24  
3,766,377 2.428 91,000 1976 25 3,643,765 2.676 97,000 1975 26  
3,572,926 2.911 104,000 1974 27 3,579,019 3.082 110,000 1973 28  
3,386,129 3.252 110,000 1972 29 3,876,011 3.360 130,000 1971 30  
3,989,205 3.506 140,000 1970 31 4,032,301 3.584 145,000 1969 32  
3,993,019 3.689 147,000 1968 33 3,899,282 3.764 147,000 1967 34  
4,057,246 3.824 155,000 1966 35 4,110,892 3.857 159,000 1965 36  
4,182,093 3.895 163,000 1964 37 4,416,302 3.887 172,000 1963 38  
4,265,440 3.840 164,000 1962 39 4,826,377 3.778 182,000 1961 40  
4,725,422 3.692 174,000 1960 41 4,634,371 3.641 169,000 1959 42  
4,597,285 3.563 164,000 1958 43 4,518,648 3.507 158,000 1957 44  
4,668,310 3.439 161,000 1956 45 4,464,137 3.356 150,000 1955 46  
4,227,667 3.267 138,000 1954 47 4,192,570 3.180 133,000 1953 48  
3,863,432 3.068 119,000 1952 49 4,131,847 2.953 122,000 1951 50  
3,838,209 2.819 108,000 1950 51 3,595,173 2.688 97,000 1949 52  
3,516,992 2.584 91,000 1948 53 3,497,820 2.475 87,000 1947 54  
3,668,994 2.397 88,000 1946 55 3,180,818 2.341 74,000 1945 56  
2,746,790 2.280 63,000 1944 57 2,788,492 2.220 62,000 1943 58  
2,665,273 2.173 58,000 1942 59 2,710,967 2.131 58,000 1941 60  
2,398,614 2.086 50,000 1940-1931 61-70 19,778,402 ... 377,000



1930-1901 71 or older 23,755,091 ... 384,000

[a] The number of U.S. residents on December 31, 2001, by age, were based on projections for July 1, 2000, and July 1, 2001.

(See Projections of the Resident Population by Age, Sex,, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1999 to 2100, U.S. Census Bureau, NP-D1-A, middle series.) The data were adjusted for the undercount in the 1990 decennial census.

[b] Based on separate generation life tables starting in the year of birth of the persons at each year of age. (See Appendix tables 2 and 3 for calculations for selected years of birth.)

[c] Estimates were calculated by multiplying column (1) by column (2) and rounded to the nearest 1,000.

... Not shown, because all calculations were based on rates for single years of age.

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To model the incarceration experience of the adult resident population in 2001, a separate generation life table was needed for each birth cohort born from 1901 to 1983. For example, of those born in 1980 and alive in 2001, an estimated 1.510% had ever gone to prison (Appendix table 1, column 2). Multiplying by 4,140,721 U.S. residents age 21 in 2001 (column 1), produced an estimate of 63,000 persons, age 21 in 2001, who had ever been incarcerated (column 3).

Similarly, the generation life table for the 1970 birth cohort produced an estimated prevalence of 3.584% among those age 31 in 2001. Multiplying by 4,032,301 U.S. residents age 31 in 2001 resulted in an estimated 145,000 persons age 31 in 2001 who had ever been incarcerated. The estimated 5,618,000 adults ever incarcerated in 2001 was obtained by summing the number of persons ever incarcerated, age 18 or older.

Dividing by the adult resident population of 210,207,901 yielded an estimated prevalence of ever having gone to prison of 2.673% in 2001.

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### +Estimating prevalence of imprisonment in the United States+

To illustrate the application of generation life table techniques resulting in the 1.510% rate of ever having gone to prison among persons born in 1980, consider the following calculations:

1. Estimates of the number of persons in a population of 100,000 born in 1980 who died during each age interval were obtained by multiplying the age-specific mortality rate (Appendix table 2, column 2) by the number of persons alive and not previously incarcerated at each age (column 1).

\* For example, among persons who reached age 21 without having been previously incarcerated, a total of 92 were estimated to have died (column 3) before reaching age 22 (that is, 96,607 times the mortality rate of 0.000955).

2. The number of persons in the 1980 cohort who were at risk to incarceration during an age interval was then calculated by subtracting the number dying from the number of persons who were alive and not previously incarcerated at the beginning of the age interval (column 1 minus column 3).

\* An estimated 96,515 of the persons who survived to age 21 without being incarcerated were at risk to first incarceration at age 21.

3. The number of persons in the original 100,000 population estimated to have been admitted to prison at each age (column 5) was then obtained by multiplying the age-specific first admission rates (column 4) by the number of persons alive and not previously incarcerated.

\* Among persons born in 1980 who had not been previously incarcerated by age 21, 343 were estimated to have been incarcerated before they reached age 22 (that is, 96,515 times the first incarceration rate of .003557).

4. The number of living persons at each age who had ever gone to prison was then calculated by summing the number going to prison for the first time during that year of age (column 5) plus the number of members of the 1980 birth cohort who previously went to prison and survived until the next year of age (column 6 times the survival rate, not shown).

\* Of the 1,132 persons who had gone to prison and reached age 20, 1,131 survived to reach age 21. An additional 343 persons were expected to be incarcerated for the first time before reaching age 22 (for a cumulative total of 1,474).

5. The percent of persons at each specific age who had ever gone to prison (column 7) was then calculated by dividing the number of persons who had ever gone to prison and were still alive (column 6) by all persons who were still alive (including persons never incarcerated plus ever incarcerated).

\* Among persons age 21, the prevalence rate was 1.510%, obtained by dividing 1,474 (column 6) by 97,646 (column 1 minus columns 3 and 5, plus 1,474), times 100%.

Prevalence rates for other birth cohorts were calculated using similar procedures. For example, to estimate the percent of persons age 31 in 2001 who had ever gone to prison, the calculations were applied to the 1970 birth cohort. However, the rates of first incarceration (column 4) and mortality (column 2) used in the calculations were unique to the birth cohort. (Note the differences between Appendix tables 2 and 3.)

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<B>Appendix table 2. Estimating the prevalence of imprisonment in the U.S. population for persons born in 1980</B>

Population of 100,000 births, 1980, reduced by mortality and incarceration in each successive year of age

Number alive and not Rate of first Surviving incarcerated admission to  
Expected cumulative at beginning Number Expected State or number of  
number of Age at of age dying per number of Federal prison first first  
Prevalence first interval 100,000 deaths[a] per 100,000 admissions[b]  
admissions[c] percent[d] admission Year (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

0-13	1980-93	100,000	...	1,732	0	0	0	0.000%	14	1994	98,268	44	43	1	1	1
0.001	15	1995	98,224	57	56	5	5	6	0.006	16	1996	98,163	73	72	39	38
0.045	17	1997	98,053	84	83	135	132	176	0.180	18	1998	97,838	93	91	283	
277	453	0.462	19	1999	97,470	93	91	346	337	789	0.806	20	2000	97,043	94	
91	355	344	1132	1.158	21	2001	96,607	96	92	356	343	1474	1.510			

Note: Calculations for ages 0 to 13 were based on data for each single year of age and then grouped for presentation.

... Not shown, because calculations were based on rates for single years of age.

[a] To estimate the number expected to die at each year of age, age-specific mortality rates(column 2) were multiplied by the number of persons alive and not previously incarcerated (column 1).

[b] To estimate the number expected to go to prison at each year of age, age-specific first admission rates (column 4) were multiplied by the number of persons surviving (column 1 minus column 3).

[c] To estimate the surviving number of first admissions, the number of first admissions from the x-th year of age (column 5) were added to the number of surviving first admissions from the x-1 year of age. Mortality rates for ex-prisoners by age were based on mortality rates in the general population and adjusted to reflect higher ex-prisoner mortality.

[d]To estimate the prevalence percent, this procedure was followed.

The surviving number of persons ever incarcerated (column 6) was divided by the total number of surviving persons never incarcerated (column 1 minus both columns 3 and 5) and persons ever incarcerated (column 6), times 100%.

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**Appendix table 3. Estimating the prevalence of imprisonment in the U.S. population for persons born in 1970**

Population of 100,000 births, 1970, reduced by mortality and incarceration in each successive year of age

Number alive Rate of first and not admission Surviving incarcerated to State Expected cumulative at beginning Number Expected or Federal number of number of of age dying per number of prison per first first Prevalence Age at first interval 100,000 deaths[a] 100,000 admissions[b] admissions[c] percent[d] admission Year (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

0-13	1970-83	100,000	...	2,099	0	0	0	0.000%	14	1984	97,901	49	48	1	1	1
0.001	15	1985	97,852	62	61	0	0	1	0.001	16	1986	97,791	73	71	24	23
0.025	17	1987	97,697	86	84	74	73	97	0.099	18	1988	97,539	96	94	186	181
278	0.285	19	1989	97,265	102	99	265	258	535	0.549	20	1990	96,907	107		
103	331	320	855	0.878	21	1991	96,484	110	107	266	257	1,110	1.142	22		
1992	96,121	113	109	305	293	1,402	1.444	23	1993	95,719	111	106	272			
260	1,660	1.711	24	1994	95,353	108	103	279	266	1,924	1.985	25	1995			
94,984	104	99	230	218	2,139	2.210	26	1996	94,668	100	94	232	219	2,356		
2.436	27	1997	94,354	100	94	217	205	2,558	2.648	28	1998	94,055	97	92		
257	241	2,796	2.897	29	1999	93,722	102	95	218	204	2,997	3.108	30	2000		
93,422	104	97	275	257	3,250	3.374	31	2001	93,068	110	102	218	203	3,448		
3.584																

Note: Calculations for ages 0 to 13 were based on data for each single year of age and then grouped for presentation.

... Not shown, because calculations were based on rates for single years of age.

[a] To estimate the number expected to die at each year of age, age-specific mortality rates(column 2) were multiplied by the number of persons alive and not previously incarcerated (column 1).

[b] To estimate the number expected to go to prison at each year of age, age-specific first admission rates (column 4) were multiplied by the number of persons surviving (column 1 minus column 3).

[c] To estimate the surviving number of first admissions, the number of first admissions from the x-th year of age (column 5) were added to the number of surviving first admissions from the x-1 year of age. Mortality rates for ex-prisoners by age were based on mortality rates in the general population and adjusted to reflect higher ex-prisoner mortality.

[d] To estimate the prevalence percent, this procedure was followed. The surviving number of persons ever incarcerated (column 6) was divided by the total number of surviving persons never incarcerated (column 1 minus both columns 3 and 5) and persons ever incarcerated (column 6), times 100%.

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### *Limitations*

1. The data in this report are restricted to incarcerations in State or Federal prison. Excluded are prior incarcerations in local jails and juvenile facilities because of the lack of data needed to estimate the number of first admissions to these forms of correctional supervision.

2. Estimates of the number of first admissions are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. Because the numbers of first admissions are based on a sample rather than a complete enumeration, the estimated number of first admissions may vary depending on the size of the estimate and the base

population for each demographic group.

Nonsampling error can be attributed to many sources, such as nonresponse, differences in interpretation of questions, recall difficulties, and processing errors. Among inmates, the number of first admissions may be slightly overestimated because of underreporting of criminal histories. The full extent of nonsampling error is unknown.

3. No comparable inmate survey was conducted prior 1974 to enable the calculation of first incarceration rates prior to this date. First incarceration rates in 1970 and earlier were estimated to be 80% of each age-specific rate of first incarceration in 1974.

If first incarceration rates in 1970 and earlier had averaged 90% of each age-specific first incarceration rate in 1974, the estimated number of adults alive in 2001 who had ever gone to prison would have been 1.9% higher (5,723,000). Alternatively, if earlier first incarceration rates had averaged 70% of 1974 rates, the estimated number of persons ever to have been incarcerated in 2001 would have been 1.9% lower (5,513,000).

4. Mortality rate schedules for prisoners were not available. Compared with the general population, mortality rates for prisoners were estimated to be 20% higher for adults under age 65, and the same for those age 65 and older. The estimate was based on the lower overall educational attainment of prisoners, and longitudinal studies documenting the relationship between mortality and educational attainment.

If mortality rates for adults ever incarcerated, under age 65 were instead 40% higher than that of the general population, the estimated prevalence of ever having gone to prison in 2001 would be 5,567,000 (-0.9% less). If mortality rates for prisoners had been equal to that of the general population, the estimated prevalence would have been 0.9% higher in 2001 (5,670,000).

5. Comparable mortality rates prior to 1976 were not available. However, there is minimal effect of declining mortality rates since 1900 on the

estimated number of persons ever incarcerated. Prevalence rates are only affected to the extent that there may have been a different decline in mortality among those ever incarcerated (the numerator) compared with all surviving members of a birth cohort (the denominator). Furthermore, prevalence rates were applied to estimates of the U.S. resident population (which fully reflect declines in mortality).

6. Age-specific incarceration rates do not incorporate a forecast of future rates of imprisonment, which may be affected by changes in criminal behavior, law enforcement, and in sentencing policies. Consequently, the lifetime likelihood of incarceration, 2001, and projected prevalence rates for 2002 and beyond may be different.

A fuller description of the methodological techniques used in preparing this report is available upon request from the author.

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The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawrence A. Greenfeld is director. BJS Special Reports address a specific topic in depth from one or many data sets that cover many topics.

Thomas P. Bonczar wrote this report, under the supervision of Allen J. Beck. Tom Hester and Carolyn C. Williams edited the report. Jayne E. Robinson administered final production.

August 2003, NCJ 197976

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This report in portable document format and in ASCII, its tables, and related statistical data are available at the BJS World Wide Web Internet site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>



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