GEORGIA CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA LANDSCAPE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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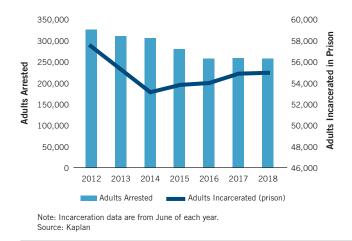
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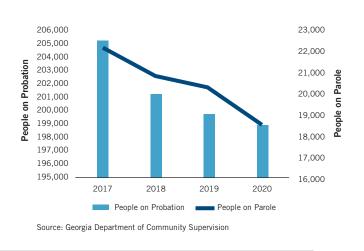
The Georgia Criminal Justice Data Landscape Report is provided as a service to the public and policy makers interested in Georgia's criminal justice system. The data in this report are intended to be a reference. The report offers a look back at the past decade of data on Georgia's adult and juvenile criminal justice systems and the people involved in those systems.

As government leaders and other stakeholders across Georgia deliberate the future of criminal justice policy, trend and comparison data can provide helpful perspectives and important context. This report is designed to be a stand-alone, go-to source for data, charts, and explanatory narrative to offer context, historical trends, and insights on criminal justice trends in Georgia. The report highlights the impacts of criminal justice reform on incarceration and community supervision.

ADULTS

The data show a decrease in the number of adults arrested. The number of adults incarcerated in prison has moderated since the enactment of criminal justice reform, which began in 2012.



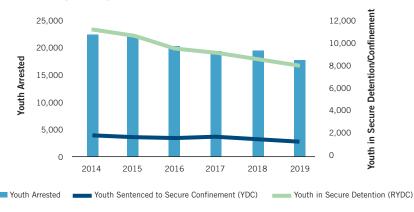


Similarly, the number of people on probation and parole

has decreased since 2017.

YOUTH

The data show that the number of youth detained in a regional youth detention center (RYDC) or sentenced to a youth development campus (YDC) has trended down since juvenile justice reform in 2013.



Sources: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget; Georgia Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, Juvenile Justice Data Exchange

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM IN GEORGIA

A series of legislative changes starting in 2012 under the direction of Governor Nathan Deal and the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians transformed state criminal justice policy, law, and funding. Six significant pieces of criminal justice legislation were passed during Governor Deal's eight years in office.



The impact of reforms on the criminal justice system is evident in the data: The number of people incarcerated in Georgia's prisons peaked at more than 57,500 in 2012. In the immediate aftermath of HB 1176, the number of people incarcerated dropped 7.7% to just over 53,000 in 2014, but has increased only slightly since then. Adult criminal justice reforms established a new baseline for sentence length for people incarcerated in the state prison system. The data show that, since reform, the number of adults serving sentences of five years or less dropped as the use of alternative sentences increased. Similarly, downward trends for youth involved in the juvenile justice system were sustained, and in some cases, accelerated with reform. For example, the youth arrest rate for violent offenses decreased 49.6% between 2009 and 2018.

The number of people supervised by the Department of Community Supervision (DCS) decreased steadily from 2017—when reform legislation related to parole and probation was enacted—to 2020: a reduction of 3.0% of people on probation and a reduction of 16.3% of people on parole. More information and research are needed to better understand how declining arrest and incarceration rates compare to state budgets for the correctional system and parole and probation.

60,000 First criminal justice reform bill 58,000 56,000 54,000 52,000 50,000 48,000 46,000 44,000 42,000 40,000 2015 2016 2017 2018 2004

PEOPLE INCARCERATED IN GEORGIA PRISONS, 2000–2019

In some cases inflection points in the data trends can be attributed to criminal justice reform or the COVID-19 pandemic. In other cases, more analysis is needed to understand why certain trends have changed in the last few years for certain populations and for certain types of crimes.

Note: Data are for June of each year. Source: Georgia Department of Corrections

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As of publication of this report, some data for 2019 and 2020 have not yet been released. Data available for 2020 reflect the impact of the pandemic on the criminal justice system and the persons being adjudicated and incarcerated. The incarceration data reflect the impact of courts being closed and having minimal operations for a significant part of 2020 due to emergency judicial orders. With limited court activity and fewer trials, more people arrested were allowed to await their court date at home rather than in local jails. The domino effect was that fewer people were convicted and incarcerated.

Prior to COVID-19, county jails continually housed more than 35,000 people. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, between March and June 2020, the state saw a total reduction of 26.9% of people in county jails. After June 2020, the number of people incarcerated in county jails increased 14% through November 2020.

CHANGES TO THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE INCARCERATED IN GEORGIA COUNTY JAILS AWAITING TRIAL OR SERVING A SENTENCE, JUNE 2015–DECEMBER 2020

	BEFORE COVID-19 June 2015 – December 2019			DURING COVID-19 March – December 2020		
	Average Number	Awaiting Trial	Serving Sentence	Average Number	Awaiting Trial	Serving Sentence
Georgia	23,591	64.3%	21.7%	20,539	67.3%	19.7%
Rural Counties	4,964	53.3%	20.1%	4,493	55.1%	19.3%
Urban Counties	18,627	68.1%	22.1%	16,046	71.8%	20.7%
Atlanta MSA	11,157	65.8%	24.1%	9,468	69.9%	21.5%
Rest of the State	12,435	63.1%	19.6%	11,072	65.3%	18.2%

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

TRENDS OF NOTE

Adult Arrests for Drug Offenses

Georgia's adult arrest rate for drug offenses is higher than the national trend, and the number of arrests for drug offenses in Georgia is trending up, especially among females. The number of arrests of White adults for drug offenses climbed from 2009 to 2018, while the arrest rate for Black adults declined, and the arrest rate for adults of All Other Races held steady. The data show a similar trend among youth arrests for drug offenses in Georgia, with the female rate rising and the arrest rate for Black youth declining.



Increase in Latinx Youth Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System

The data show an increase in Latinx youth involved in the juvenile justice system. In the past five years of available data, the number of Latinx youth referred to the juvenile justice system increased from 2,850 in 2015 to 3,467 in 2019. The number of youth sentenced to secure detention has declined for all racial groups except Latinx since 2015. In fact, the percentage of Latinx youth increased at six of the nine decision points in the juvenile justice system: referral, diversion, secure detention, petition, delinquent, and commitment.



NUMBER OF YOUTH REFERRALS IN GEORGIA, BY RACE, 2010-2019

Source: Georgia Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, Juvenile Justice Data Exchange

OTHER TRENDS IN THE ADULT POPULATION



The total number of arrests in Georgia fell **20.6%** from 2009 to 2018, while the arrest rate dropped **28.1%**.



The arrest rate per 100,000 population for violent offenses in Georgia decreased **26.6%** compared to a decrease of **12.4%** in the US overall from 2009 to 2018.



In 2018, Black adults comprised **31.6%** of the adult population in Georgia but accounted for **59.0%** of arrests in the state for violent offenses.



The number of people on probation and parole decreased steadily from 2017 to 2020: a reduction of **3.0%** of people on parole and a reduction of **16.3%** of people on parole.



A much **higher proportion** of Black people in Georgia, particularly males, are arrested compared to their proportion in the **overall state population**. This is the case for both adults and youth.

OTHER TRENDS IN THE YOUTH POPULATION



The number of youth admitted to RYDCs decreased **52.6%** from 2010 to 2019, while the number of youth served at YDCs decreased **63.3%**.



The number of White youth involved in the juvenile justice system declined the most at **six decision points** — arrest, referral, commitment, secure detention (RYDC), petition, and delinquent — while the number of Black youth **decreased the most** at the diversion and secure confinement (YDC) decision points.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For a copy of the full report and other supplemental information, go to cviog.uga.edu/GeorgiaCJReport; Georgia criminal justice data visualizations curated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government can be accessed at https://georgiadata.org/topics/Courts-and-Crime.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEGISLATION IN GEORGIA

SB 440 1994

- Known as the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1994
- Created Seven Deadly Sins
- Youth age 13 and older can be tried as an adult under certain circumstances
- Allows youth to be sentenced to life without parole

HB 1176 2012

- First of Governor Deal's criminal justice reform laws
- Raised the threshold for felony theft from \$500 to \$1,500
- Created degrees of severity for crimes such as burglary, forgery, and theft
- Provided alternatives to incarceration for low-risk, nonviolent offenders who committed drug and property offenses
- Allowed imposition of graduated sanctions in response to probation violations
- Allowed courts to order electronic monitoring for all offenders
- Provided a \$10 million investment in accountability courts

HB 242 2013

- · Also called the Juvenile Justice Reform Act
- · Eliminated mandatory minimums for youth in the justice system
- Focused use of out-of-home placements on higher-level offenders; prohibited use for status offenses
- · Focused resources on evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism
- Required the use of assessment instruments before detaining a youth in a secure facility
- Allowed alternative forms of supervision for lower-risk, lower-need youth

HB 349 2013

- Created higher education grant for use upon release for those who complete their GED while incarcerated
- Allowed judges discretion in sentencing in some drug-related cases and Seven Deadly Sins sentences
- · Defined unsupervised probation
- Allowed restoration of a suspended driver's license for limited use by drug and mental health accountability court participants to facilitate participation in court-ordered program

1994 1995

SB 441 1995

- Known as Mandatory Minimums of 1995
- Offenders convicted of one of the Seven Deadly Sins must serve minimum of 10 years
- Also known as "two strikes" law: offenders convicted of two of the Seven Deadly Sins sentenced to life without parole

2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

SB 365 2014

- Created Program and Treatment Completion Certificate
- Required the Georgia Department of Corrections to develop reentry programs for returning citizens

HB 310 2015

- Consolidated felony probation supervision under new Department of Community Supervision
- Created Board of Community Supervision to oversee private and governmental misdemeanor probation providers

SB 174 2017

- Implemented probation and parole reforms
- Created behavioral incentive date (BID)
- Created additional eligibility for early probation termination
- Allowed for transition to unsupervised probation



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Carl Vinson Institute of Government

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government is a public service unit of the University of Georgia that has been providing training and technical assistance to governments in Georgia for more than 90 years. The mission of the Institute of Government is to promote excellence in government. We work to increase the capacity of governments in Georgia to better serve their constituents through training, applied research, technical assistance, and technology solutions. The Institute conducts nonpartisan research that helps partners make better data-informed decisions.

The Institute of Government has compiled data to inform decision-making for years. The Georgia County Guide is one example of an annual data report in which county-level data are compiled in a single location. The Institute's website **Georgiadata.org** provides interactive and static table data on a variety of topics. Criminal justice is just one of many search topics on **Georgiadata.org**, allowing the public and policy makers to access and filter data at the county level and by demographic variables.

Public Welfare
FoundationPublic Welfare FoundationFor over 70 years, Public Welfare Foundation has supported efforts to advance
justice and opportunity for people in need. Today, the Foundation's efforts
focus on catalyzing a transformative approach to justice that is community-led,
restorative, and racially just through investments in criminal justice and youth
justice reforms. These efforts honor the Foundation's core values of racial equality,
economic well-being, and fundamental fairness for all.

Learn more at www.publicwelfare.org.

Acknowledgements

The Institute of Government would like to thank the analysts, writers, editors, and graphic artists who helped gather, analyze, visualize, and describe the data in the report. Each section of the report was developed in consultation with subject matter experts and was reviewed by state agency data experts when possible.

Carl Vinson Institute of Government Authors and Contributors

Holly Lynde, Fiscal Analyst	David Tanner, Associate Director		
Emily Franklin, Fiscal Analyst	Courtney Alford-Pomeroy, Communications Director		
Sandy Lee, Consultant	Jake Brower, Graphic Designer		
Jan Coyne, Cartographer	Karen DeVivo, Editor		

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