

GEORGIA CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA LANDSCAPE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Carl Vinson Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

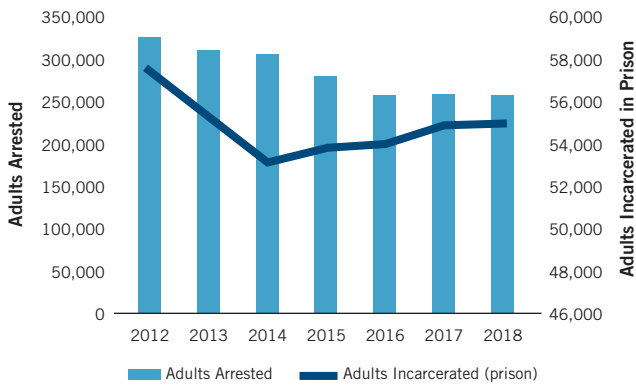
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

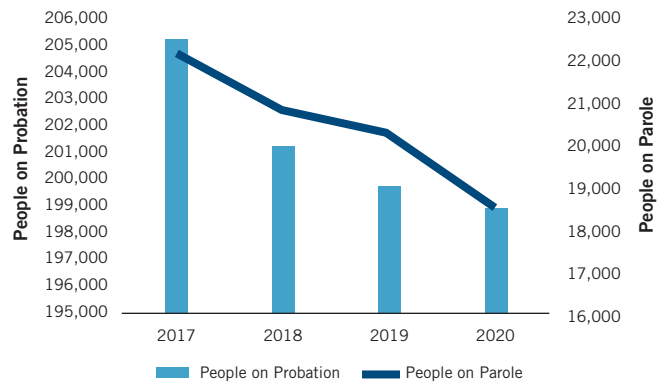
ADULTS

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.



Note: Incarceration data are from June of each year.
Source: Kaplan

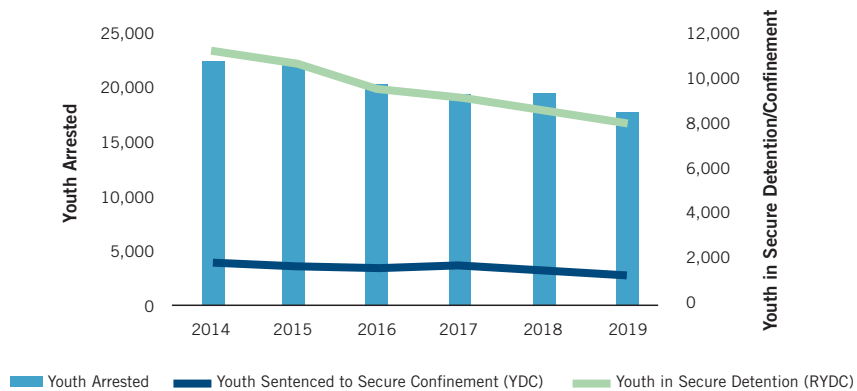
Similarly, the number of people on probation and parole has decreased since 2017.



Source: Georgia Department of Community Supervision

YOUTH

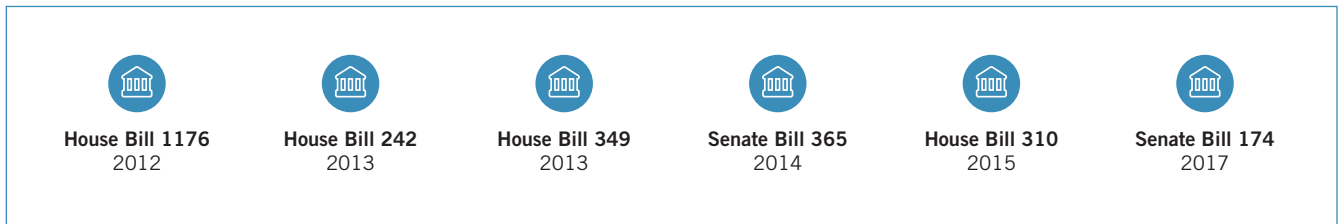
The data show that the number of youth detained in a regional youth detention center (RYDC) or sentenced to a youth development campus (YDC) has trended down since juvenile justice reform in 2013.



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

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM IN GEORGIA

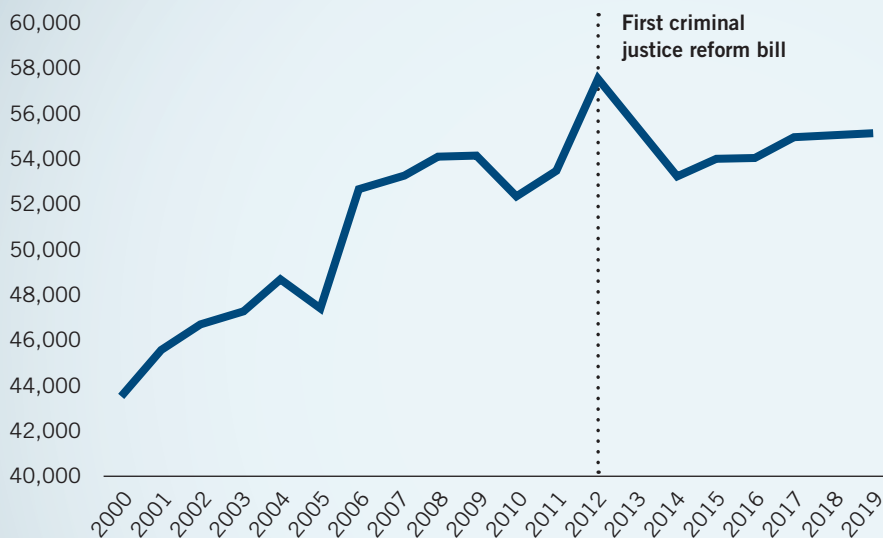
A series of legislative changes starting in 2012 under the direction of Governor Nathan Deal and the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians transformed state criminal justice policy, law, and funding. Six significant pieces of criminal justice legislation were passed during Governor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

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			DURING COVID-19		
	June 2015 – December 2019			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%

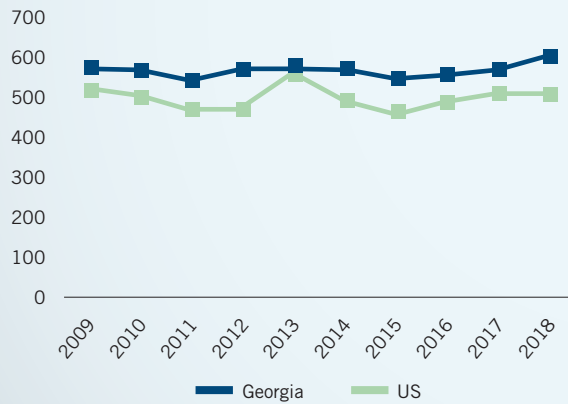
Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

TRENDS OF NOTE

Adult Arrests for Drug Offenses

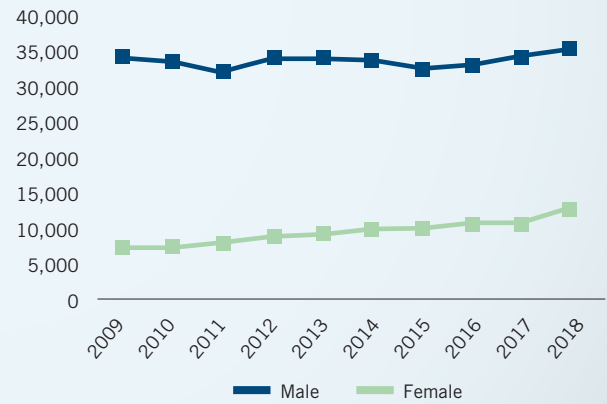
Georgia's adult arrest rate for drug offenses is higher than the national trend, and the number of arrests for drug offenses in Georgia is trending up, especially among females. The number of arrests of White adults for drug offenses climbed from 2009 to 2018, while the arrest rate for Black adults declined, 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.

ARREST RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION FOR DRUG OFFENSES IN GEORGIA, 2009–2018



Source: Kaplan

TOTAL NUMBER OF ARRESTS FOR DRUG OFFENSES IN GEORGIA, BY SEX, 2009–2018

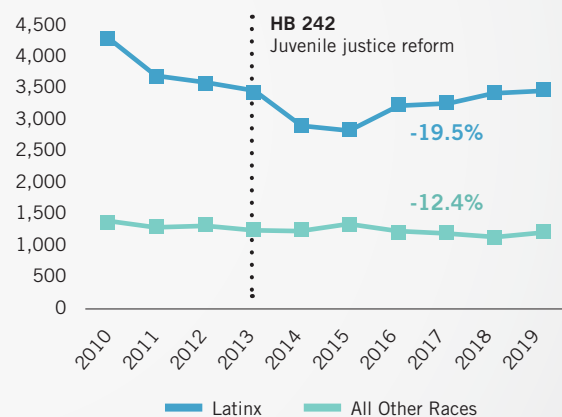
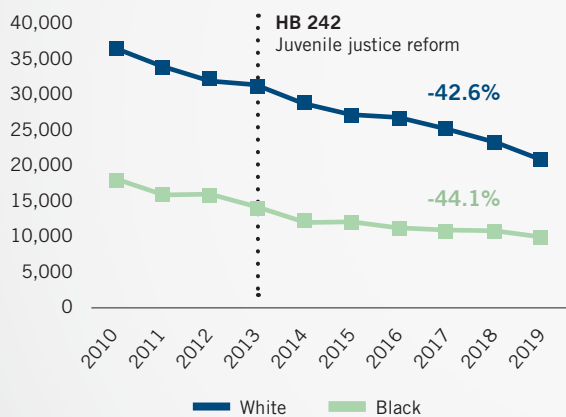


Source: Kaplan

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%**.

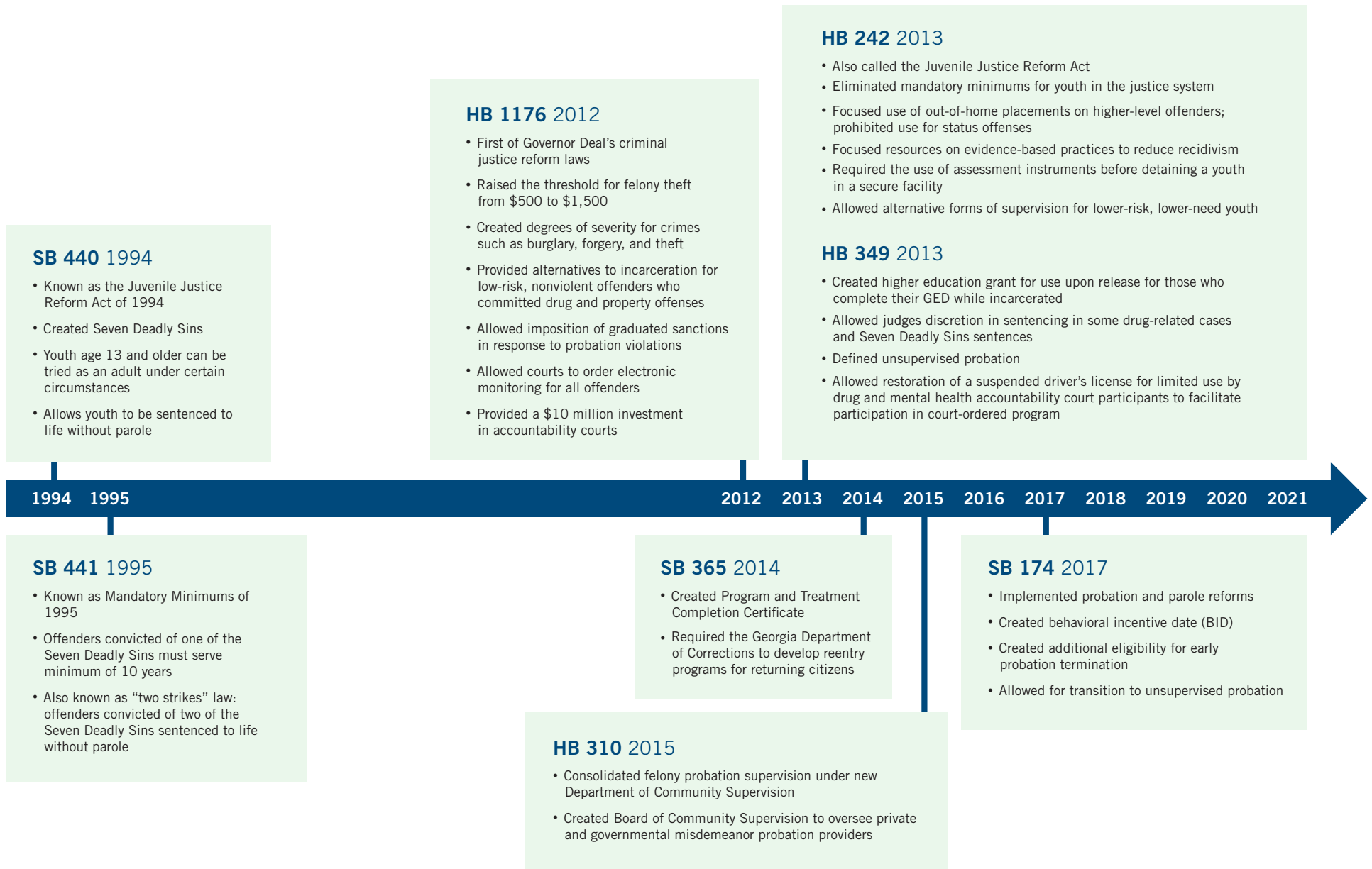


The number of White youth involved in the juvenile justice system declined the most at **six decision points** — arrest, referral, commitment, secure detention (RYDC), petition, and delinquent — while the number of Black youth **decreased the most** at the diversion and secure confinement (YDC) decision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





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 Foundation

Public Welfare Foundation

For 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

GEORGIA CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA LANDSCAPE REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY