

Prisons & Drug Offenders

Published: 01/09/2008 - 17:27

1.

(2007) According to the American Corrections Association, the average daily cost per state prison inmate per day in the US is \$67.55. State prisons held 253,300 inmates for drug offenses in 2007. That means states spent approximately \$17,110,415 per day to imprison drug offenders, or \$6,245,301,475 per year.

Source:

American Correctional Association, 2006 Directory of Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies and Probation and Parole Authorities, 67th Edition (Alexandria, VA: ACA, 2006), p. 16; Sabol, William J., PhD, and West, Heather C., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2007 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2008), NCJ224280, p. 21, Appendix Table 10.

2.

(2000) The table below shows the average sentence mean and median! imposed on Federal prisoners for various offenses in 2000.

Average Federal Sentence

Offense
Mean
Median

All Offenses

56.8 months

33.0 months

All Felonies

58.0 months

36.0 months

Violent Felonies

86.6 months

63.0 months

Drug Felonies

75.6 months

55.0 months

Property Felony - Fraud

22.5 months

14.0 months

Property Felony - Other

33.4 months

18.0 months

Public Order Felony - Regulatory

28.0 months

15.0 months

Public Order Felony - Other

46.5 months

30.0 months

Misdemeanors

10.3 months

6.0 months

Source:

US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Federal Criminal Case Processing, 2000, With Trends 1982-2000 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, November 2001), p. 12, Table 6.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fccp00.pdf>

3.

(2005) "The United States leads the world in the number of people incarcerated in federal and state correctional facilities. There are currently more than 2 million people in American prisons or jails. Approximately one-quarter of those people held in U.S. prisons or jails have been convicted of a drug offense. The United States incarcerates more people for drug offenses than any other country. With an estimated 6.8 million Americans struggling with drug abuse or dependence, the growth of the prison population continues to be driven largely by incarceration for drug offenses."

Source:

Justice Policy Institute, "Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety," (Washington, DC: January 2008), p. 1.

http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/08_01_REP_DrugTx_AC-PS.pdf

4.

"The number of people in state prisons for drug offenses has increased 550 percent over the last 20 years. A recent JPI report found that the amount spent on "cops and courts" – not rates of drug use -- is correlated to admissions to prison for drug offenses. Counties that spend more on law enforcement and the judiciary admit more people to prison for drug offenses than counties that spend less. And increases in federal funding through the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Grant Program have promoted increases in resources dedicated to drug enforcement. As crime continues to fall in many communities, law enforcement will have more time to focus on aggressive policing of drug offenses; this can be expected to lead to even higher drug imprisonment rates and crowded jails and prisons. According to FBI reports, 83 percent of drug arrests are for possession of illegal drugs alone.¹⁶ And regardless of crime in a particular jurisdiction, police often target the same neighborhoods to make drug arrests, which can increase the disproportionate incarceration of people of color."

Source:

Justice Policy Institute, "Pruning Prisons: How Cutting Corrections Can Save Money and Protect Public Safety," (Washington, DC: May 2009), p. 6.

[http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_REP_PruningPrisons_AC P...](http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_REP_PruningPrisons_AC_P...)

5.

"The increases in drug imprisonment, the decrease in releases from prison, and the re-incarceration for technical parole violations are leading to significant overcrowding and contribute to the growing costs of prisons. Prisons are stretched beyond capacity, creating dangerous and unconstitutional conditions which often result in costly lawsuits. In 2006, 40 out of 50 states were at 90 percent capacity or more, with 23 of those states operating at over 100 percent capacity."

Source:

Justice Policy Institute, "Pruning Prisons: How Cutting Corrections Can Save Money and Protect Public Safety," (Washington, DC: May 2009), pp. 7-8.

[http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_REP_PruningPrisons_AC P...](http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_REP_PruningPrisons_AC_P...)

6.

"We must have law enforcement authorities address the issue because if we do not, prevention, education, and treatment messages will not work very well. But having said that, I also believe that we have created an American gulag."

Source:

Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey (USA, Ret.), Director, ONDCP, Keynote Address, Opening Plenary Session, National Conference on Drug Abuse Prevention Research, National Institute on Drug Abuse, September 19, 1996, Washington, DC.

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/MeetSum/CODA/Keynote2.html>

7.

(2002) According to a federal survey of jail inmates, in 2002, of the 96,359 violent offenders in jail, 37.6% used alcohol at the time of their offense, 21.8% used drugs, and 47.2% used alcohol or drugs; of the 112,895 property offenders in jail that year, 28.5% used alcohol at the time of their offense, 32.5% used drugs, and 46.8% used alcohol or drugs; of the 112,447 drug offenders in jail that year, 22.4% used alcohol at the time of their offense, 43.2% used drugs, and 51.7% used drugs or alcohol at the time of their offense.

Source:

Karberg, Jennifer C. and Doris J. James, US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002" (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, July 2005), Table 7, p. 6.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/sdatji02.pdf>

8.

(1997) "Department of corrections data show that about a fourth of those initially imprisoned for nonviolent crimes are sentenced for a second time for committing a violent offense. Whatever else it reflects, this pattern highlights the possibility that prison serves to transmit violent habits and values rather than to reduce them."

Source:

Craig Haney, Ph.D., and Philip Zimbardo, Ph.D., "The Past and Future of U.S. Prison Policy: Twenty-five Years After the Stanford Prison Experiment," American Psychologist, Vol. 53, No. 7 (July 1998), p. 721.

http://www.csdp.org/research/haney_apa.pdf

9.

(2004) "17% of State and 18% of Federal prisoners committed their crime to obtain money for drugs."

Source:

Mumola, Christopher J., and Karberg, Jennifer C., "Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004," (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Oct. 2006) (NCJ213530), p. 1.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf>

10.

According to the US Justice Department, "While the number of offenders in each major offense category increased [from 1995 to 2003], the number incarcerated for a drug offense accounted for the largest percentage of the total growth (49%), followed

by public-order offenders (38%)."

Source:

Harrison, Paige M. & Allen J. Beck, Allen J., PhD, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2005 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Nov. 2006) NCJ 215092, p. 10.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p05.pdf>

11.

"Violent offenders (47%) were the only offender group in State prisons with less than half meeting the DSM-IV criteria for drug dependence or abuse. Property and drug offenders (63% of each) were the most likely to be drug dependent or abusing. "Drug offenders (52%) were the only group of Federal inmates with at least half meeting the drug dependence or abuse criteria. Property offenders (27%) reported the lowest percentage of drug dependence or abuse."

Source:

Mumola, Christopher J., and Karberg, Jennifer C., "Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004," (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Oct. 2006) (NCJ213530), p. 7.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf>

12.

Prisons - Federal

(2007) Federal prisons were estimated to hold 179,204 sentenced inmates in 2007. Of these, 15,647 were incarcerated for violent offenses, including 2,915 for homicide, 8,966 for robbery, and 3,939 for other violent crimes. In addition, 10,345 inmates were serving time for property crimes, including 504 for burglary, 7,834 for fraud, and 2,006 for other property offenses. A total of 95,446 were incarcerated for drug offenses. Also, 56,237 were incarcerated for public-order offenses, including 19,528 for immigration offenses and 24,435 for weapons offenses.

Source:

Sabol, William J., PhD, and West, Heather C., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2007 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2008), NCJ224280, p. 22, Appendix Table 12.

<http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p07.pdf>

13.

(2002) According to a federal survey of jail inmates, of the total 440,670 jail inmates in the US in 2002, 112,447 (25.5%) were drug offenders: 48,823 (11.1%) for possession and 56,574 (12.8%) for trafficking.

Source:

Karberg, Jennifer C. and Doris J. James, US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002" (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, July 2005), Table 7, p. 6.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/sdatji02.pdf>

14.

(2004) According to the Justice Department, 5.3% of drug offenders in federal prisons are serving time for possession; 91.4% are serving time for trafficking offenses; and 3.3% are in for "other."

Source:

Mumola, Christopher J., and Karberg, Jennifer C., "Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004," (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Oct. 2006) (NCJ213530), p. 4.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf>

15.

Prisons - State and Local

(2005) State prisons held a total of 1,296,700 inmates on all charges at yearend 2005. In absolute numbers an estimated 687,700 inmates in State prison at yearend 2005 (the latest year for which offense data is available) were held for violent offenses: 166,700 for murder, 177,900 for robbery, 129,200 for assault, and 164,600 for rape and other sexual assaults. In addition, 248,900 inmates were held for property offenses, 253,300 for drug offenses, and 98,700 for public-order offenses.

Source:

Sabol, William J., PhD, and West, Heather C., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2007 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2008), NCJ224280, p. 21, Appendix Table 10.

<http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p07.pdf>

16.

(2004) "Offense distributions differed between sentenced male and female State prisoners. More than half of males (53%) were sentenced for violent offenses, compared to 34% of females. Among State prisoners, sentenced females were more likely than sentenced males to be sentenced for property (31% vs. 20%) and drug offenses (29% vs. 19%).

"There were also differences in offense distributions at yearend 2004 by race and Hispanic origin. A majority of black (53%) and Hispanic (54%) prisoners were sentenced for violent offenses, compared to about half (50%) of white prisoners. Blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to be sentenced for drug offenses (23% of blacks, 21% of Hispanics, and 15% of whites). Whites were more likely (26%) than blacks (18%) or Hispanics (18%) to be sentenced for property offenses."

Source:

Sabol, William J., PhD, Couture, Heather, and Harrison, Paige M., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2006 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2007), NCJ219416, p. 8.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p06.pdf>

17.

(2005) Of the 253,300 state prison inmates serving time for drug offenses at yearend 2005, 113,500 (44.8%) were black, 51,100 (20.2%) were Hispanic, and 72,300 (28.5%) were white.

Source:

Sabol, William J., PhD, and West, Heather C., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2007 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2008), NCJ224280, p. 21, Appendix Table 10.

<http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p07.pdf>

18.

(2006) "State courts sentenced an estimated 1,132,290 persons for a felony in 2006, including 206,140 (or 18% of all felony convictions) for a violent felony (table 1.1). A drug crime was the most serious conviction offense for about a third of felons sentenced in state courts that year."

Source:

Sean Rosenmerkel, Matthew Durose and Donald Farole, Jr., , "Felony Sentences in State Courts, 2006 –Statistical Tables," Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2009). p. 2

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fssc06st.pdf>

19.

(1998) "States spent \$29.8 billion in 1998 for adult corrections including incarceration, probation and parole. Eighty-one percent of this amount (\$24.1 billion) was spent on substance-involved offenders. Of the \$24.1 billion, \$21.4 billion went to run and build prisons to house substance-involved offenders, \$1.1 billion for parole and \$695 million for probation for substance-involved offenders. An additional \$899 million was spent on state aid to localities for substance-involved offenders."

Source:

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, "Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on State Budgets" (New York, NY: CASA, January 2001), p. 15.

<http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/articlefiles/379-Shoveling%20Up.p...>

20.

(2006) "In 2006 an estimated 38% of persons sentenced for a felony in state courts were ordered to pay a fine as part of their sentence (table 1.5). Approximately 1 in 4 property offenders was ordered to make restitution and 23% of offenders convicted of drug possession were sentenced to treatment."

Source:

Sean Rosenmerkel, Matthew Durose and Donald Farole, Jr., "Felony Sentences in State Courts, 2006 –Statistical Tables," Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2009), p. 2.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fssc06st.pdf>

21.

"In 1995, 23% of state prisoners were incarcerated for drug offenses in contrast to 9% of drug offenders in state prisons in 1986. In fact, the proportion of drug offenders in the state prison population nearly tripled by 1990, when it reached 21%, and has remained at close to that level since then. The proportion of federal prisoners held for drug violations doubled during the past 10 years. In 1985, 34% of federal prisoners were incarcerated for drug violations. By 1995, the proportion had risen to 60%."

Source:

Craig Haney, Ph.D., and Philip Zimbardo, Ph.D., "The Past and Future of U.S. Prison Policy: Twenty-five Years After the Stanford Prison Experiment," *American Psychologist*, Vol. 53, No. 7 (July 1998), p. 715.

http://www.csdp.org/research/haney_apa.pdf

22.

"Mothers in state prison (58%) were more likely than fathers (49%) to report having a family member who had also been incarcerated (table 11). Parents in state prison most commonly reported a brother (34%), followed by a father (19%). Among mothers in state prison, 13% reported a sister and 8% reported a spouse. Six percent of fathers reported having a sister who had also been incarcerated; 2%, a spouse.

"While growing up, 40% of parents in state prison reported living in a household that received public assistance, 14% reported

living in a foster home, agency, or institution at some time during their youth, and 43% reported living with both parents most of the time (appendix table 11). Mothers (17%) held in state prison were more likely than fathers (14%) to report living in a foster home, agency, or institution at some time during their youth. Parents in federal prison reported lower percentages of growing up in a household that received public assistance (31%) or living in a foster home, agency, or institution (7%). These characteristics varied little by gender for parents held in federal prison.

"More than a third (34%) of parents in state prison reported that during their youth, their parents or guardians had abused alcohol or drugs. Mothers in state prison (43%) were more likely than fathers (33%) to have had this experience. Fewer parents (27%) in federal prison reported having a parent or a guardian who had abused alcohol or drugs."

Source:

Glaze, Lauren E. and Maruschak, Laura M., "Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children" (Washington, DC: USDOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Jan. 2009), NCJ222984, p. 7.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf>

23.

"But while drug-free schools remain a fantasy, their policies are contributing to an uneducated underclass that just gets larger, more despairing, and more entrenched. This underclass now includes five million young adults between sixteen and twenty-four who are both out of school and out of work, with few skills and fewer prospects. It includes most ex-prisoners, half of whom lack a high school education, and most of whom are jobless one year after release. And it includes Black Americans and other racial minorities who have never remotely attained the standard of well-being common throughout the developed world."

Source:

Eric Blumenson, Eva S. Nilsen, "How to Construct an Underclass, or How the War on Drugs Became a War on Education," *The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice*, (May 2002), p. 76.

http://lsr.nellco.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=suffolk_f..

24.

"Increased admissions to drug treatment are associated with reduced incarceration rates. States with a higher drug treatment

admission rate than the national average send, on average, 100 fewer people to prison per 100,000 in the population than states that have lower than average drug treatment admissions. Of the 20 states that admit the most people to treatment per 100,000, 19 had incarceration rates below the national average. Of the 20 states that admitted the fewest people to treatment per 100,000, eight had incarceration rates above the national average."

Source:

Justice Policy Institute, "Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety," (Washington, DC: January 2008), p. 2.

http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/08_01_REP_DrugTx_AC-PS.pdf

25.

(2004) "Violent offenders in State prison (50%) were less likely than drug (72%) and property (64%) offenders to have used drugs in the month prior to their offense."

Source:

Mumola, Christopher J., and Karberg, Jennifer C., "Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004," (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Oct. 2006) (NCJ213530), p. 1.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf>

26.

(2007) In 2007, drug law violators comprised 19.5% of all adults serving time in State prisons - 253,300 out of 1,296,700 State prison inmates.

Source:

Sabol, William J., PhD, and West, Heather C., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2007 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2008), NCJ224280, p. 21, Appendix Table 10.

<http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p07.pdf>

27.

(2004) According to the US Justice Department, 27.9% of drug offenders in state prisons are serving time for possession; 69.4% are serving time for trafficking offenses; and 2.7% are in for "other."

Source:

Mumola, Christopher J., and Karberg, Jennifer C., "Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004," (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Oct. 2006) (NCJ213530), p. 4.

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf>

28.

"Among male state prisoners, violent (47%) and property (48%) offenders were less likely to report having children than public-order (60%) and drug (59%) offenders (table 6). For women held in state prison, violent (57%) offenders were less likely than drug (63%), property (65%), and public-order (65%) offenders to be a mother.

"The prevalence of being a parent differed by gender and offense for inmates held in state and federal prisons. For state inmates, female (65%) property offenders were more likely to be a parent than male (48%) property offenders. In federal prison, male (69%) drug offenders were more likely than female (55%) drug offenders to report having children.

"Among men held in federal prison, drug offenders (69%) were more likely than property (54%) and violent (50%) offenders to report having children (appendix table 5). Public-order offenders (62%) were also more likely than violent offenders to report having children. For women in federal prison, the likelihood of being a mother did not differ by offense."

Source:

Glaze, Lauren E. and Maruschak, Laura M., "Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children" (Washington, DC: USDOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Jan. 2009), NCJ222984, p. 4.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf>

29.

(1985) "During 1985, an estimated 20 white males and 30 black males under age 18 were admitted to State prison for drug offenses. In 1997 black males under age 18 outnumbered white males of the same age by more than 5 to 1 (640 to 120 admissions for drug offenses)."

Source:

Strom, Kevin J., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Profile of State Prisoners Under Age 18, 1985-1997 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, February 2000), p. 5.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pspa1897.pdf>

30.

"The number of offenders under age 18 admitted to prison for drug offenses increased twelvefold from 70 to 840! between 1985 to 1997. By 1997 drug offenders made up 11% of admissions among persons under 18 compared to 2% in 1985."

Source:

Strom, Kevin J., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Profile of State Prisoners Under Age 18, 1985-1997 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, February 2000), p. 4.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pspa1897.pdf>

31.

(2006) According to the American Corrections Association, the average daily cost per state prison inmate per day in the US is \$67.55. State prisons held 249,400 inmates for drug offenses in 2006. That means it cost states approximately \$16,846,970 per day to imprison drug offenders, or \$6,149,144,050 per year.

Source:

American Correctional Association, 2006 Directory of Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies and Probation and Parole Authorities, 67th Edition (Alexandria, VA: ACA, 2006), p. 16; Sabol, William J., PhD, Couture, Heather, and Harrison, Paige M., Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2006 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, December 2007), NCJ219416, p. 24, Appendix Table 9.

Related Chapters:

- [Race & Prison](#)