

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

A Focus on Incarceration

April 2024

Introduction

It is well-documented that incarceration rates across the United States are high, with racial and ethnic groups disproportionately represented among incarcerated populations. This brief answers questions about national incarceration trends and reviews the distribution of incarcerated individuals across New Hampshire. However, NH data is limited, which in turn limits what is known about the population involved in NH's justice system.

What does the national incarceration data tell us?

The United States incarcerates more people than any other nation,¹ both as a proportion of overall population (583 per 100,000 individuals) and as a total number (1.9 million individuals), according to data published in 2024. A trend toward decarceration began in 2008,² after continuous increases from 1972.³ Rates of incarceration are disproportionately high among people of color; while 14% of the overall US population is Black, 35% of incarcerated individuals are Black, according to 2024 data.⁴

Where are NH's incarcerated populations?

NH has one federal prison, three state prisons, and ten county jails. Figure 1 shows the comparative number of people that are incarcerated across those three systems,

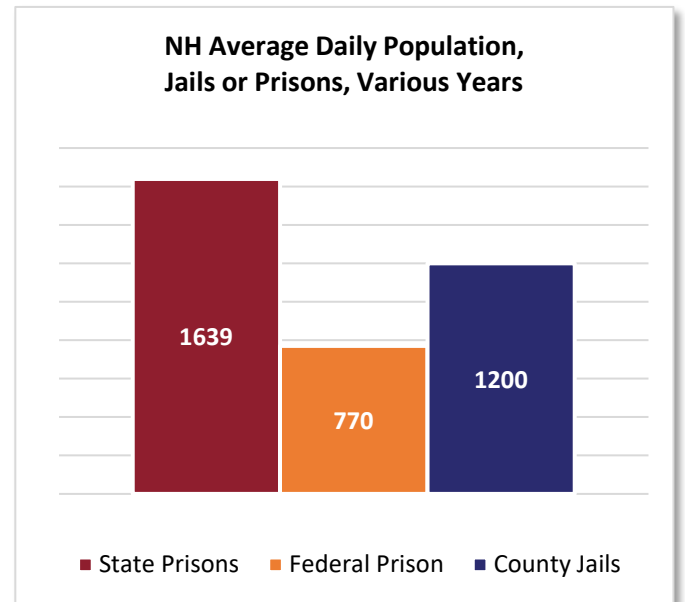


Figure 1. NH Population in Prisons and Jails (various years); (Sources: NH Dept of Corrections; Federal Bureau of Prisons; County Annual Reports; see text for details)

frequently reported as “Average Daily Population (ADP)”.⁵ Generally, the state prisons incarcerated almost as many people as the federal prison and county facilities, combined. Figure 2 shows the location of these different facilities across the state, and each is described in more detail below.

The federal prison

The sole Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in the state is a medium security facility for male offenders, located in Berlin. According to 2024 data from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the ADP at FCI Berlin was 770.⁶

The state prisons

NH has three state-controlled prisons: the Northern New Hampshire Correctional Facility in Berlin, the New Hampshire State Prison for Men in Concord, and the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women in Concord. The NH Department of Corrections (DOC) is responsible for the operations of these facilities. The population count for each facility is reported in the DOC Annual Report.⁷

The **Northern NH Correctional Facility** is classified as a minimum (C2) to close custody (C4) security facility for men. According to 2022 NH DOC Annual Report, *the population was 536 male inmates in June 2022.*

The **NH State Prison for Men** (Concord) is classified as medium (C3) to maximum (C5) security facility. According to 2022 NH DOC Annual Report, *the population was 1,000 male inmates in June 2022.*

The **NH Correctional Facility for Women** (Concord) is classified as minimum (C2) to maximum (C5) security. According to 2022 NH DOC Annual Report, *the population was 103 female inmates in June 2022.*

The county jails

Table 1 summarizes data from each of the 10 county jails, based on available annual reports.⁸ Because these reports are produced independently from one another, there is not

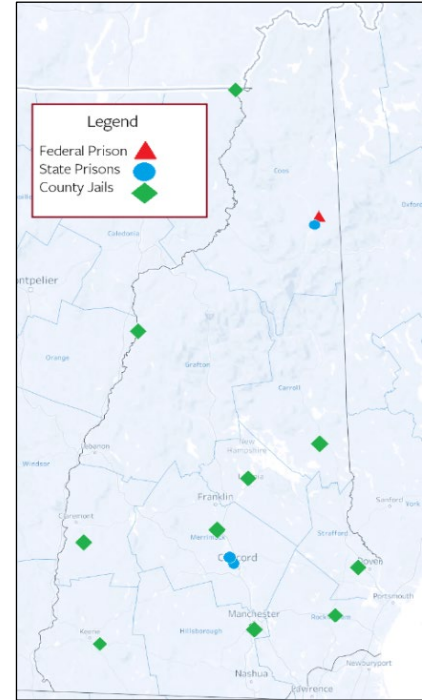


Figure 2. Locations of federal and state prisons and county jails in NH, 2024

Table 1. Average daily populations, by county jail; Source: County Annual Reports (years indicated)

County (Report Year)	Location	ADP
Belknap (2023)	Laconia	57
Carroll (2022)	Ossipee	55
Cheshire (2022)	Keene	84
Coös (2023)	West Stewartstown	17
Grafton (2022)	North Haverhill	59
Hillsborough (2023)	Manchester	295
Merrimack (2022)	Boscawen	140
Rockingham (2023)	Brentwood	148
Strafford (2022)	Dover	287
Sullivan (2023)	Claremont	58

always comparable information across the facilities. It is also worth noting that because the jails are short-term facilities, the overall count of individuals held in any given year is higher than any individual daily count. For example, while Belknap County had an ADP of 57 in 2022, the overall number of bookings was 1,139.

What does the data tell us about disparity in incarceration in NH?

Data from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the NH DOC annual reports, and the reports provided at the county level do not report data about their incarcerated populations for each facility by race. Therefore, it is unclear what proportion of incarcerated people in each facility in the state are from communities of color. Figure 3 shows the prison population, by race, aggregated across all three NH State facilities, from data in the 2022 NH DOC Annual Report.

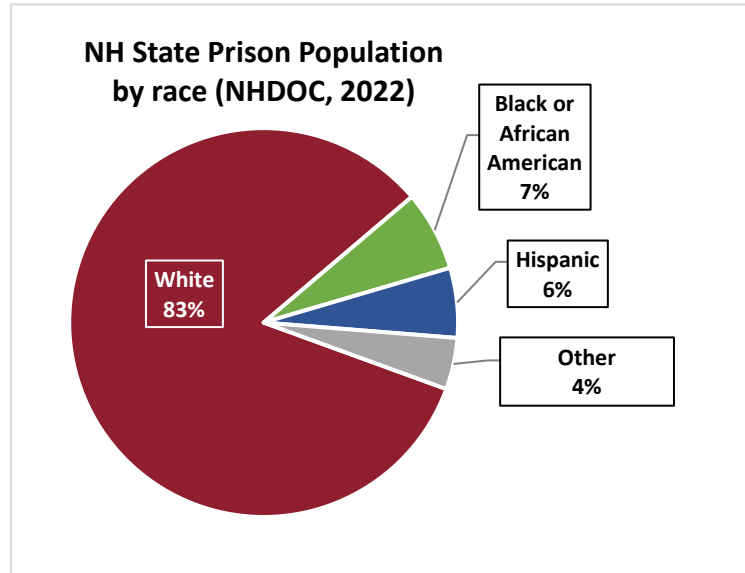


Figure 3. NH state prisons combined population, by race, 2022 (NH DOC Annual Report)

The Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) provides state-level analysis of data compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).⁹ Figure 4 reports the percent of people in prisons and in jails, compared to the percent of the total population, by race. PPI analysis (similar to the NH DOC data shown in Figure 4) show that 7% of the state prison population is Black, while less than 2% of the overall population in NH is Black. Similarly, 6% of the state prison population is Hispanic, while the Hispanic population overall in NH is 4%. In the jails, Black and Hispanic individuals account for 25% of overall jail populations, despite making up less than 6% of the resident population.

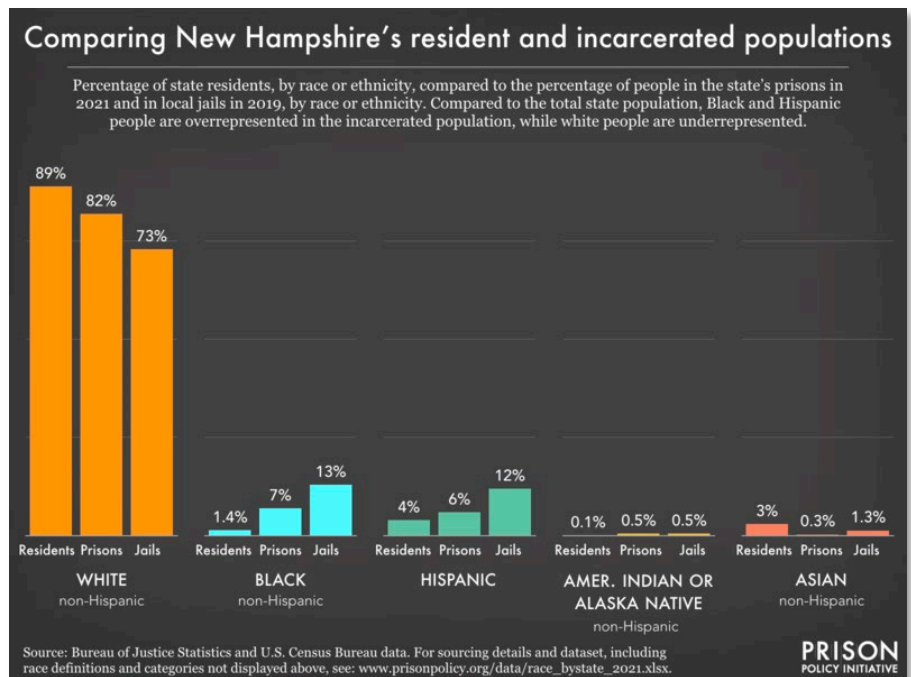


Figure 4. NH incarcerated populations and overall population, by race, 2021 and 2019, from the Prison Policy Initiative

What are the next steps?

Despite the lack of data on facility-level demographics across NH, what is reported indicates that NH incarcerates people of color at disproportionately high rates compared to White populations, mirroring national trends. Understanding the systemic changes necessary to address this long-standing issue is important. However, the lack of race-specific data collection in arrests, booking, sentencing, and jail population limits further analysis. More work is needed to improve data collection to permit better reporting and investigation of the underlying issues related to disparities in incarceration.

¹ Sawyer, W., and Wagner, P. (2024, March 14). Mass incarceration: the whole pie 2024. Prison Policy Initiative, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2024.html>.

² Gramlich, J. (2021, August 16). America's incarceration rate falls to lowest level since 1995. Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/08/16/americas-incarceration-rate-lowest-since-1995/>.

³ Nellis, A. (2023, January 25). Mass incarceration trends. The Sentencing Project, <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/mass-incarceration-trends>.

⁴ Sawyer, W., and Wagner, P. (2024, March 14). Mass incarceration: the whole pie 2024. Prison Policy Initiative, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2024.html>.

⁵ Code of Federal Regulations, 47 CFR 64.6000(c). Average Daily Population (ADP) means the sum of all inmates in a facility for each day of the preceding calendar year, divided by the number of days in the year. [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/section-64.6000#p-64.6000\(c\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/section-64.6000#p-64.6000(c)).

⁶ Federal Bureau of Prisons. (2024). Population Statistics. https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/population_statistics.jsp.

⁷ NH Department of Corrections. (2022). Annual report. <https://www.nh.gov/transparentnh/annual-reports/corrections/documents/fy22.pdf>.

⁸ Email correspondence and <https://www.belknapcounty.gov/county-commissioners/files/2022-annual-report>, <https://www.carrollcountynh.gov/Archive.aspx?ADID=77>, https://co.cheshire.nh.us/wp-content/uploads/Departments/Commissioners/Annual_Report/2021-County-Report.pdf, https://www.co.strafford.nh.us/images/UploadedFiles/Finance_Department/2022_County_Annual_Report.pdf

⁹ Prison Policy Initiative. (2023). New Hampshire profile. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/NH.html>.