Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Jail Population

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America's principal source for criminal justice statistics
Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of the 2020 Annual Survey of Jails Addendum on COVID-19
- Key findings from *Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Jail Population, January-June 2020*
- Methodology and challenges
- Next steps in collecting COVID-19 data
- Q&A session
Overview of the 2020 Annual Survey of Jails Addendum on COVID-19
COVID-19 research and development

• Initial proposal in late March 2020 to collect COVID-19 data in the Annual Survey of Jails

• Survey development completed in less than two weeks
  o BJS leadership expedited review
  o Correctional health expert provided technical consultation
  o American Jails Association, National Institute of Corrections, and jail administrators reviewed addendum

• OMB approved survey on 06/19/2020
COVID-19 addendum items

- One-day inmate counts every month from January to May 2020
  - March 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020 number of:
  - Inmates that received expedited release due to COVID-19
  - Inmate COVID-19 tests and the number of positive tests
  - Staff that tested positive for COVID-19
  - Inmate and staff deaths related to COVID-19
Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Jail Population, January-June 2020
Inmate population decline (185,400 inmates) since midyear 2019 resulted from both a reduction in admissions to jails and expedited releases in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 8.7 million admissions in 2020 was 16% lower than the 10.3 million admissions in 2019.
- From March to June 2020, about 208,500 inmates received expedited release.
• **18% drop** in the inmate population between the end of February and the end of March

• Jails located in counties with the highest (1% or more) confirmed residential COVID-19 infection rates experienced the largest percentage decline in their inmate population.
Impact on the jail population composition

• Inmates held for a misdemeanor declined 45% since midyear 2019, outpacing the decline in the number of inmates held for a felony (down 18%)
• The female population saw a greater decline (down 37%) than the male population (23%) from midyear 2019 to midyear 2020
• The decline in the convicted population (down 34%) outpaced the decline in the unconvicted population (down 21%)
Jail incarceration rate at midyear 2020 was the lowest since 1990

**TABLE 11**
Local jail incarceration rates, by sex and race or ethnicity, midyear 2019 and midyear 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number per 100,000 U.S. residents 2019&lt;sup&gt;a,b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Number per 100,000 U.S. residents 2020&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Change Number per 100,000 U.S. residents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>167&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-57</td>
<td>-25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>295&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-90</td>
<td>-23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>42&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-25</td>
<td>-37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>133&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-51</td>
<td>-27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>465&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-135</td>
<td>-22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>134&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-43</td>
<td>-24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>274&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-146</td>
<td>-34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>104&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-24</td>
<td>-18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-23.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact on facilities

• Jails became **less crowded**. Occupied bed space declined from 81% at midyear 2019 to 60% at midyear 2020

• Percentage of jails operating above their rated capacity **declined** from 15% of all jails at midyear 2019 to 7% at midyear 2020

• Jails located in counties with the highest confirmed residential COVID-19 infection rates were **the least occupied** (54% of rated capacity) at midyear 2020, down from about 73% at midyear 2019
Inmate COVID-19 tests

• From March to June 2020, jails conducted 215,360 inmate COVID-19 tests, equivalent to 9% of all admissions
  o More than 11% of these tests were positive

• Highest inmate COVID-19 testing rate (21% of admissions) was in jails located in counties with the highest confirmed residential COVID-19 infection rates
  o 14% of these tests were positive

• The 50 largest jail jurisdictions accounted for more than half of positive inmate COVID-19 tests
Inmate COVID-19 deaths

- 43 inmates in local jails died from COVID-19 from March to June 2020
  - 33 deaths were COVID-19 confirmed
  - 10 deaths were COVID-19 suspected
  - About 70% (30) were reported as COVID-19 deaths based on a medical examiner’s or coroner’s evaluation
  - Inmate deaths were isolated to 22 jail reporting units (RU); one RU reported 7 inmate deaths
From March to June 2020, nearly 5% (10,850) of all local jail staff (233,220) tested positive for COVID-19.

Nearly 8% of staff employed in jails located in counties with the highest confirmed residential COVID-19 infection rates tested positive, compared to 1% of staff in jails located in counties with the lowest infection rates.

The 50 largest jail jurisdictions accounted for about 42% of all jail staff (4,570 of 10,850) who tested positive for COVID-19.
Staff COVID-19 deaths

- 40 staff employed in local jails died from COVID-19 from March to June 2020
  - 32 deaths were COVID-19 confirmed
  - 8 deaths were COVID-19 suspected
  - About 68% (27) were reported as COVID-19 deaths based on a medical examiner’s or coroner’s evaluation
  - Staff deaths were isolated to staff employed in 30 jail reporting units (RU); one RU reported 5 employee deaths
Methodology and challenges
Data sources

• 2020 Annual Survey of Jails (ASJ): COVID data were collected as part of 2020 ASJ, a sample survey of 897 local jail jurisdictions

• 2019 Census of Jails (COJ): 2019 comparison data were based on COJ, a complete enumeration of 2,850 local jail jurisdictions
## Sample Design for 2020 Annual Survey of Jails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stratum</th>
<th>Number of jurisdictions in census</th>
<th>Number of sampled jurisdictions</th>
<th>Active sampled jurisdictions</th>
<th>Active sampled reporting units</th>
<th>Design weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Large jails (certainty stratum)</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jails holding at least one juvenile on June 28, 2019 and a confined population of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>264-499</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>141-263</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>69-140</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0-68</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jails holding adults only on June 28, 2019 and a confined population of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>227-749</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>103-226</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>40-102</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0-39</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Regional jails (certainty stratum)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
- Large jails are those that held at least one juvenile inmate and 500 or more inmates, or 750 or more adult inmates on June 28, 2019.
- Regional jail jurisdictions are created by two or more local governing bodies through cooperative agreements.
2020 ASJ survey response rate

- 2020 response rate was 94%, similar to previous years
- Cut data collection by two months by compressing outreach schedule
- BJS participated in non-response follow-up calls to increase participation of large jails
2020 ASJ item response rates

Items sorted by question order

COVID-19 module
Non-response adjustment for 2020 ASJ

• Survey non-response weight was applied to minimize bias due to survey non-response

• Missing data were imputed to minimize bias due to item non-response

\[ w_h = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_h} p_{hi} \times A_{hi}}{\sum_{i=1}^{n_h} p_{hi} \times R_{hi}} \]

where—

- \( n_h \) = number of jurisdictions sampled in weighting class \( h \),
- \( p_{hi} \) = sampling weight for jurisdiction \( i \) in weighting class \( h \),
- \( A_{hi} \) = active status indicator for jurisdiction \( i \) in weighting class \( h \) (1 = active, 0 = out-of-scope), and
- \( R_{hi} \) = response indicator of jurisdiction \( i \) in weighting class \( h \) (1 = respondent, 0 = non-respondent).
Missing data imputation

Prior year data available?

Yes

Last observation carried forward

Value affected by COVID-19?

No

Not adjusted

Yes (e.g., population, admissions)

Adjusted for average y2y change

No

Weighted sequential hot deck
Imputation of COVID-19 variables

• Weighted sequential hot deck: Donor for a missing item randomly selected from a pool of similar jails, sorted by a related variable
• Validity checks: Imputed values compared to available COVID-19 reports agencies published online
• Special case NYC: No suitable donor found; regression models used to predict its missing values
• Death data were not imputed
Next steps in collecting COVID-19 data
BJS data collections and reports which include data about COVID-19

• Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Jail Population, July-Dec 2020
• Annual Surveys of Probation and Parole COVID-19 supplement for 2020 Collection
• National Prisoner Statistics: Coronavirus Pandemic Supplement (NPS-CPan)

- Collects information on changes in population, capacity to hold inmates
- Reports on the number of COVID-19 tests and results for staff and incarcerated individuals
Annual Surveys of Probation and Parole COVID-19 supplement for 2020 Collection

- Measure the impact and effects of the pandemic on agency operations and supervised population counts
- Collect additional population counts during the COVID-19 pandemic: quarterly populations and 6-month entries and exits
- Collect information on changes to supervision techniques, policies, and practices
National Prisoner Statistics: Coronavirus Pandemic Supplement (NPS-CPan)

• Understand prison population flow on a monthly basis
• Review COVID-19 related policies taken by DOCs/BOP
• Standardize definitions to produce reliable national estimates of measures and allow cross-state comparison
• Provide demographic distribution of prisoners who tested positive for COVID, as well as those who died
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