



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Jail Population

Todd Minton, Statistician

Zhen Zeng, Statistician

Rich Kluckow, Chief of Corrections Statistics Unit

*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
  - BJS leadership expedited review
  - Correctional health expert provided technical consultation
  - 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



**BJS**

Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Inmate population

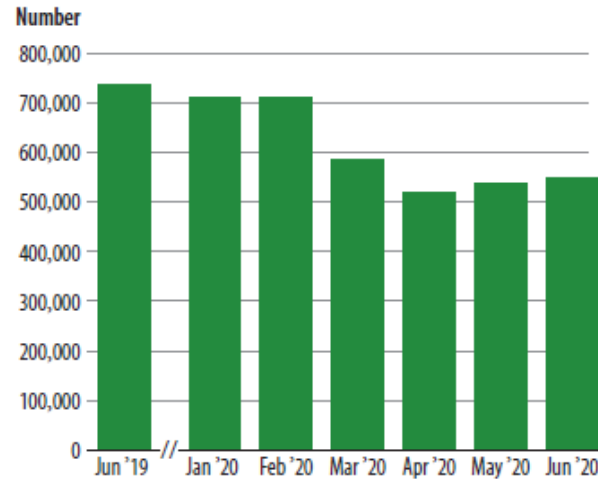
- Inmate population decline (185,400 inmates) since midyear 2019 resulted from both a **reduction in admissions** to jails and **expedited releases** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
  - 8.7 million admissions in 2020 was **16% lower** than the 10.3 million admissions in 2019
  - From March to June 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

**FIGURE 1**

Number of inmates confined in local jails on the last weekday in June 2019 and the last weekday of each month from January to June 2020







# 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

Characteristic	Number per 100,000 U.S. residents		Change	
	2019 <sup>a*</sup>	2020 <sup>b</sup>	Number per 100,000 U.S. residents	Percent
Total	224	167 †	-57	-25.5%
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	386	295 †	-90	-23.4%
Female	66	42 †	-25	-37.2
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White <sup>c</sup>	184	133 †	-51	-27.6%
Black <sup>c</sup>	600	465 †	-135	-22.6
Hispanic	176	134 †	-43	-24.3
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>c</sup>	420	274 †	-146	-34.8
Asian <sup>c</sup>	25	19 †	-6	-22.9
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <sup>c</sup>	129	104 †	-24	-18.7
Two or more races <sup>c</sup>	25	19 †	-6	-23.7



# 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**
  - 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
  - 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**



# Staff COVID-19 positive tests

- 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



# Annual Survey of Jails sampling design

## Sample Design for 2020 Annual Survey of Jails

Stratum		Number of jurisdictions in census	Number of sampled jurisdictions	Active sampled jurisdictions	Active sampled reporting units	Design weight
1	Large jails <sup>a</sup> (certainty stratum) Jails holding at least one juvenile on June 28, 2019 and a confined population of	258	258	258	292	1.000
2	264-499	73	29	29	29	2.517
3	141-263	69	17	17	17	4.059
4	69-140	60	10	10	10	6.000
5	0-68 Jails holding adults only on June 28, 2019 and a confined population of	48	4	4	4	12.000
6	227-749	359	275	275	287	1.305
7	103-226	452	100	99	99	4.520
8	40-102	580	65	64	64	8.923
9	0-39	883	73	73	73	12.096
10	Regional jails <sup>b</sup> (certainty stratum)	68	68	68	69	1.000
Total		2,850	899	897	943	

<sup>a</sup>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.

<sup>b</sup>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





# 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  $h$ ,

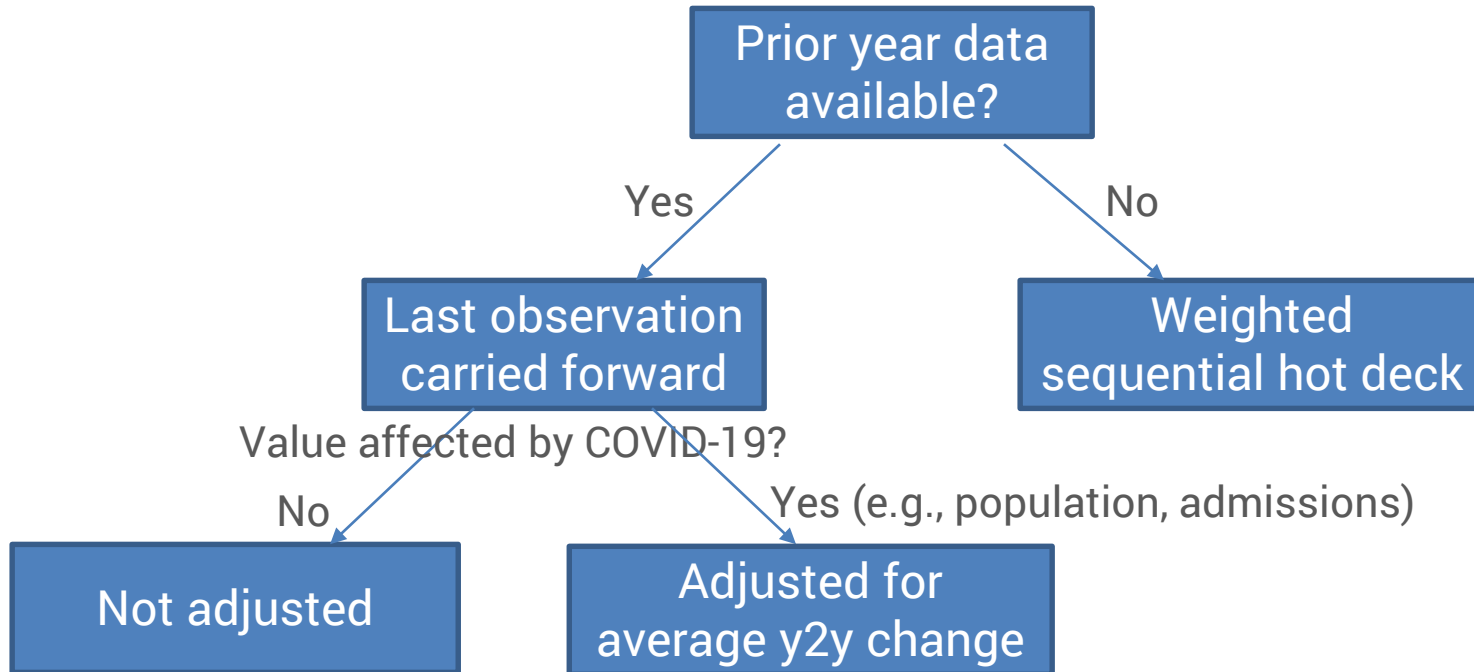
$p_{hi}$  = sampling weight for jurisdiction  $i$  in weighting class  $h$ ,

$A_{hi}$  = 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





# 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
- Jails in Indian Country, 2019-2020, and the Impact of COVID-19 on the Tribal Jail Population
- Annual Surveys of Probation and Parole COVID-19 supplement for 2020 Collection
- National Prisoner Statistics: Coronavirus Pandemic Supplement (NPS-CPan)



**BJS**

Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Jails in Indian Country, 2019-2020, and the Impact of COVID-19 on the Tribal Jail Population

- 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

## Contact:

[Richard.Kluckow@usdoj.gov](mailto:Richard.Kluckow@usdoj.gov)

[Todd.Minton@usdoj.gov](mailto:Todd.Minton@usdoj.gov)

[Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov](mailto:Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov)



810 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531 | Phone: +1 (202) 307-0765 | [bjs.gov](http://bjs.gov)