
FISCAL TOPICS

Fiscal Services Division

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National and State Corrections System Populations

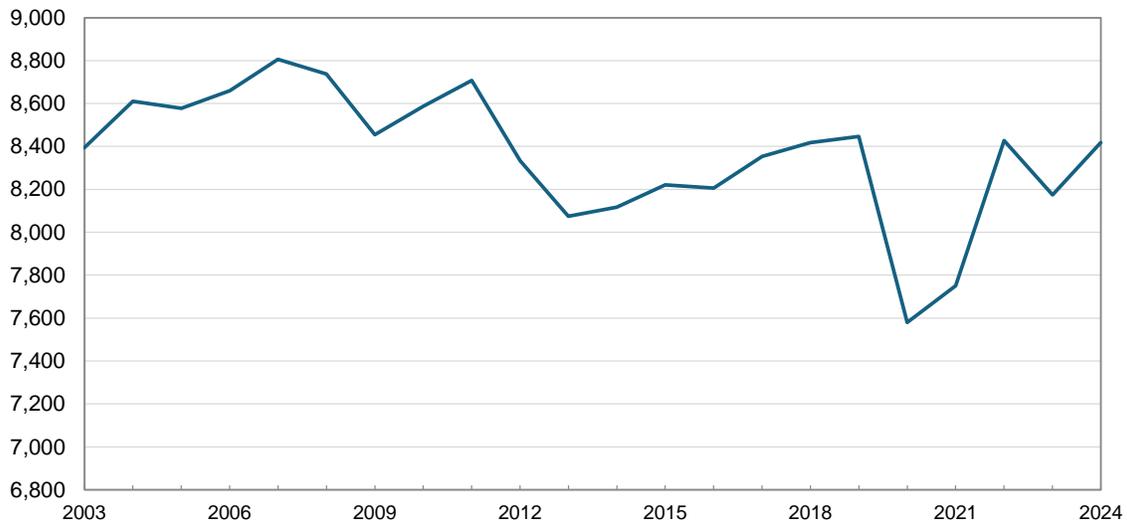
Historical Trends

According to data provided by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the United States sentenced prison population (federal and state) gradually increased from 1978 until reaching a peak in 2009, with the year-end population at 1,615,487 offenders. The U.S. prison population has shown a prevalent downward trend since 2009, with the total at 1,204,322 at the year-end of 2021, the latest available [data](#). From 2009 through 2021, the U.S. prison population decreased by approximately 25.5%.

Information from the BJS publication [Correctional Populations in the United States, 2022 — Statistical Tables](#), published in May 2024, shows aggregate 2022 year-end data for the sentenced prison population increasing in the order of 25,000 individuals (2.0%) over 2021, or a rate of 700 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents. This is still below that of 2019 pre-COVID-19 incarceration rates, which was 810 per 100,000.

The Iowa prison population peaked in 2007 with 8,800 offenders. The Iowa prison population slowly trended downward through 2020 and is back to prepandemic levels. The Iowa prison population exhibited an increase at the end of fiscal year (FY) 2022, with 8,427 on June 30, 2022. This was an increase of 676 offenders (8.7%) over FY 2021. In FY 2023, the Iowa prison population decreased to 8,175 offenders, but in FY 2024 increased to an end-of-year population of [8,417](#). Between June 2003 and June 2024, the Iowa prison population increased by 22 offenders (0.3%), and was at the lowest in 2020 with 7,579 offenders. For FY 2003 through 2024, the prison population has remained stable with an average end-of-year population of 8,366 offenders.

Iowa Sentenced Prison Population 2003-2024



More Information

Bureau of Justice Statistics: bjs.ojp.gov

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National and State Corrections Systems Expenditures

At the national level, corrections expenditures include the total cost associated with supervision, confinement, and rehabilitation of individuals convicted of criminal offenses. This cost is that of running prisons, jails, probation and parole programs, capital outlays (cost of construction, equipment, land, or structure purchases), and intergovernmental expenses (payments to other governments for specific purposes). Based on the 2017 U.S. Department of Justice's most up-to-date [report](#), state governments made nearly \$50.0 billion in direct expenditures for corrections, with 87.8% of that amount accounting for correctional institutions. From 1997 to 2017, corrections expenditures increased by 42.0%, from \$63.0 billion to \$89.0 billion.

In Iowa, State corrections spending has increased over the last two decades but has remained relatively stable as a percentage of General Fund appropriations. The FY 2004 General Fund appropriations to the Department of Corrections (DOC) were \$265.3 million, which amounts to about 5.9% of total General Fund appropriations. In FY 2024, General Fund appropriations to the DOC were \$430.4 million, equating to 5.0% of the total appropriations. A comparison of distributed spending in operating budget components shows limited change across fiscal years. The observable difference is in Community-Based Corrections (CBC) and the Corrections Central Office over time, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1

Historic Iowa DOC Budget Comparison by Component			
	<u>FY 2004 Actual</u>	<u>FY 2014 Actual</u>	<u>FY 2024 Actual</u>
Institutions	75.4%	73.0%	70.2%
Community-Based Corrections (CBC)	22.6%	23.3%	23.9%
Corrections Central Office	2.0%	3.7%	5.9%