

## Offender Deaths in Custody

### Offender Deaths

Iowa's average annual mortality rate per 10,000 state prisoners is 17.6 deaths from all causes, for the period 2001 through 2012. National comparative data is available in the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics report, [Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000 – 2012 – Statistical Tables](#) published in October 2014. Table 26 of the report provides the mortality rates for federal and state prison systems. Reported deaths do not include death due to state execution in states that have the death penalty.

There are 13 states with a lower average annual mortality rate across the reporting period. The table below shows the number of offender deaths in Iowa prisons from FY 2010 through FY 2014 by cause of death and by percentage. The number of suicides peaked in FY 2011.

**Iowa State Prison Deaths in Custody**

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Illness	11 (78.6%)	8 (67.0%)	15 (93.8%)	12 (75.0%)	15 (88.2%)
Suicide	2 (14.3%)	4 (33.0%)	1 (6.2%)	3 (18.8%)	0
Accident	0	0	0	0	1 (5.9%)
*Homicide	1 (7.1%)	0	0	0	1 (5.9%)
Other	0	0	0	1 (6.2%)	0
Total	14	12	16	16	17

\*Homicide includes homicides by other offenders or incidental to an escape.

Iowa offender deaths in state prison by type of death are comparable to national data. About 88.0% of state prisoner deaths nationwide are attributed to illness (cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death). Approximately 6.1% of state prisoner deaths nationally are due to suicide while about 2.5% are due to homicide. The source of this information is Table 16 in the report, [Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000 – 2012 – Statistical Tables](#) published by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics in October 2014.

### Additional Information

See the [Factbook 2014](#) published by the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) in February 2015 for national and state statistical and comparative data regarding corrections systems.

See the [Legislative Guide, Criminal Law Overview](#) published by the LSA in December 2014 for a general overview of the substantive criminal and sentencing laws in Iowa.

For more information about the various appropriations to the Department of Corrections, refer to the Fiscal Topics published by the Fiscal Services Division of the LSA at: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/fiscal/fiscalTopics>.

### More Information

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>

U.S. Department of Justice: <http://www.justice.gov/>

U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm>

Iowa Department of Corrections: <http://www.doc.state.ia.us/>

Department of Human Rights, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division: <http://www.humanrights.iowa.gov/cjip/index.html>

LSA Staff Contact: Beth Lenstra (515-281-6301) [beth.lenstra@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:beth.lenstra@legis.iowa.gov)