

MAINE CRIME AND JUSTICE BRIEF SERIES: III

CORRECTIONS IN MAINE

The increase in Maine's prison, jail and probation populations have stretched state and local resources over the last ten years. This brief examines Maine's corrections trends in relation to other states in terms of population and cost.

Maine continues to have the lowest incarceration rate per capita in the nation. In 2004, Maine had the lowest number of state prison inmates per 100,000 residents in the nation (148). Maine had a comparable number of state prison inmates and a lower inmate rate per 100,000 residents than either New Hampshire or Vermont. Maine's incarceration rate was three times lower than the national average (486).

During calendar year 2004, Maine's state prison population increased slightly, by a rate of 0.5 percent from 2,013 to 2,024. However, over the last ten years, the prison population in Maine has increased 45 percent.

STATE	NUMBER OF INMATES	STATE	INMATES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS
North Dakota	1,327	Maine	148
Vermont	1,968	Minnesota	171
Wyoming	1,980	Rhode Island	175
Maine	2,024	New Hampshire	187
New Hampshire	2,448	North Dakota	195

The number of adults on probation in Maine declined 5.4 percent in 2004.

In 2004, Maine's probation population declined from 9,855 on January 1 to 9,322 on December 31. The 5.4 percent decline was the third highest decline in the nation behind Washington (-27.4) and Alabama (-7.2). At year end 2004, Maine's probation rate totaled 901 probationers per 100,000 adult Maine residents, the ninth lowest probation rate in the nation and two times lower than the national average of 1,884 probationers per 100,000 population. The adult probation decline in 2004 can be attributed to a change in policy that eliminated the use of probation for low risk misdemeanor (Class D and E) offenders.

Maine's female prisoner population is the second lowest in the nation. At the end of 2004, there were 125 female state prisoners in Maine, the second lowest total in the nation behind New Hampshire at 119. Maine's incarceration rate of 18 per 100,000 female residents is tied with New Hampshire as the third lowest in the nation behind Massachusetts (11), and Rhode Island (11).

Despite these low numbers, Maine was one of eleven states to experience an average annual increase of female incarcerated inmates of more than 10 percent between 1995 and 2004 at 14.8 percent. The one-year percentage increase from 2003, however, was relatively low at 0.8 percent, five times lower than the national average (4.0 percent).

Publication Date

March 2006

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Maine Crime & Justice Brief Series

Produced by the Maine Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), the series charts changes in crime, arrests and incarceration to present a portrait of crime and justice indicators in the state for the year 2004. The briefs include the most recent comprehensive Department of Public Safety and Department of Corrections data sets available for Maine. The series also uses 2005 data where available. The Maine Crime and Justice Brief Series is on the SAC website at:

muskie.usm.maine.edu/justiceresearch

Maine Statistical Analysis Center

The SAC serves as a clearinghouse for data collection and statistical analysis for the Maine criminal justice system, promotes a research-based approach and conducts research that support its identified priorities and objectives.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE

The average in-house population of adult inmates in Maine's county jails has increased 80 percent over the last ten years. The average inmate population in county jails has increased dramatically in Maine over the last ten years. In 2005, the total daily in-house population in county jails averaged 1,494 inmates, more than 80 percent over the average in 1996. The number of female inmates in 2005 has increased 225 percent since 1996. Females now represent 11.3 percent of the average population, an increase from 6.3 percent in 1996.

AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF IN-HOUSE INMATES IN COUNTY JAILS

YEAR	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
96	52	775	826	3.4%
97	66	906	972	17.7%
98	76	916	992	2.1%
99	74	856	930	-6.3%
00	92	1,116	1,208	29.9%
01	89	940	1,029	-14.8%
02	133	1,273	1,406	36.6%
03	153	1,297	1,450	3.1%
04	170	1,318	1,488	2.6%
05	169	1,325	1,494	0.0%

Three factors have contributed to the increase in county jail populations: the increase of pre-trial offenders; the increase in the number of individuals reincarcerated for violating the terms of their probation; and a modest increase in the sentenced population. In the last ten years, the number of pre-trial inmates has more than doubled (120.3 percent), and now represents more than 60 percent of the inmates in the county jails. The number of sentenced inmates has also increased, but at a relatively slower rate (43.9 percent).

Maine has among the lowest percentages of corrections expenditures in the nation. State spending on corrections reflects the costs to operate prison systems and includes spending on juvenile justice programs and alternatives to incarceration, such as probation. In fiscal year 2004, Maine spent \$123 million on corrections, which includes all corrections expenditures except institutions for the criminally insane. Many other states exclude some correction categories from their reported expenditures. Despite including these costs in their expenditure categories, corrections expenditures in Maine represent only 1.9 percent of all expenditures in the state. This figure is sixth lowest in the nation. As a percentage of the general fund, Maine corrections spending represented 4.6 percent of the total in fiscal year 2004, the fifth lowest in the country. In both cases, Maine's share of corrections expenditures was far lower than the national average.

IMPLICATIONS

In 2003-2004, Maine made a significant policy change to reduce the number of low-risk offenders on probation. However, increasing county jail populations place enormous social and fiscal costs on Maine's communities. The Corrections Alternative Advisory Committee and joint work by the Departments of Corrections and Health and Human Services to divert mentally ill individuals from the criminal justice system, have started to confront the challenge of reducing county jail populations. Subsequent policy briefs will monitor whether these efforts have reversed the ten year trend of higher prison and county jail populations.

State	Corrections Expenditures as a percent of total state expenditures	State	Corrections General Fund Expenditures as a percent of total General Fund expenditures
West Virginia	1.0	Minnesota	2.7
North Dakota	1.7	Hawaii	4.1
Arkansas, Minnesota, New Hampshire	1.8	West Virginia	4.2
		North Dakota	4.4
Maine	1.9	Maine	4.6