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ONE IN 34 U.S. ADULTS UNDER CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISION IN 2011, LOWEST RATE SINCE 2000

WASHINGTON – About 6.98 million people were under some form of adult correctional supervision in the U.S. at yearend 2011, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. This was the equivalent of about one in 34 U.S. adults (or about 2.9 percent of the adult population) in prison or jail or on probation or parole, the lowest rate of adults under correctional supervision observed since 2000.

The adult correctional population declined by 1.4 percent or 98,900 offenders during 2011. This was the third consecutive year of decline in the number of offenders under the supervision of adult correctional authorities.

The population under adult correctional supervision includes prisoners in the custody of state and federal facilities, local jail inmates, probationers and parolees. Probation is a court-ordered period of correctional supervision in the community, generally used as an alternative to incarceration. Parole is a period of conditional supervised release in the community following a prison term.

At yearend 2011, about 4,814,200 offenders were supervised in the community on probation or parole, and 2,239,800 were incarcerated in state or federal prisons or local jails. About one in 50 adults was under community supervision while about one in 107 adults was in prison or jail.

While both the community supervision population (down 1.5 percent) and the incarcerated population (down 1.3 percent) decreased during 2011, the majority of the decline (83 percent) in the total number of adults under correctional supervision during the year was due to a drop in the probation population. The probation population declined two percent or by 81,800 offenders during 2011, falling below four million for the first time since 2002.

For the third consecutive year, the number of offenders discharged from probation supervision (about 2.2 million offenders) exceeded the number who entered probation (about 2.1 million) during 2011, contributing to the decrease in the probation population.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of probationers completed their terms of supervision or were discharged early during 2011, about the same percentage as in 2010. About 5.5 percent of probationers at risk of failing were incarcerated at some point during 2011, consistent with the rate in 2000 (also 5.5 percent).

(MORE)

Thirty-two states reported declines in their probation population during 2011. California (down 28,600) accounted for a quarter of the decline. Twenty jurisdictions—including the District of Columbia and the federal system—reported increases in their probation population, led by Maryland (up 8,200) and Alabama (up 7,600).

An increase in the parole population partially offset declines in all other components of the adult correctional population. The parole population increased 1.6 percent or by 13,300 offenders during 2011. The state parole population increased 1.1 percent and the federal parole population grew 5.1 percent during the year.

About 1.1 million adults moved onto or off parole during 2011. While both parole entries (down 3.4 percent) and parole exits (down 5.3 percent) declined during the year, the number of entries exceeded the number of exits for the second consecutive year. As a result of the decline in exits, the average length of stay for adults on parole increased from about 18 months in 2010 to 19 months in 2011.

The failure rate of parolees (defined as the percentage of parolees who were returned to jail or prison out of all parolees who could have been incarcerated at any point during the year) decreased for the fifth consecutive year. During 2011, about 12 percent of parolees at risk of reincarceration were incarcerated at some time during the year, down from about 15 percent during 2006.

Slightly more than half of parolees (52 percent) who were discharged from parole during 2011 completed their terms of supervision or were discharged early, unchanged from 2010.

In 2011, 22 states and the District of Columbia reported declines in their parole population, while 28 states and the federal system reported increases. California (up 5,900), the federal system (up 5,300), and Texas (up 1,800) accounted for more than half of the total increase in parolees.

Probation and Parole in the United States, 2011 (NCJ 239686) was written by Laura M. Maruschak and Erika Parks of BJS. *Correctional Population in the United States, 2011* (NCJ 239972) was written by Lauren E. Glaze and Erika Parks of BJS. The reports, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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