

U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Statistics

10/6/79

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BJS Data Report, 1986

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U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Statistics

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Director

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Public-use tapes of BJS data sets and other criminal justice data are available from the Criminal Justice Data Archive, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 (313-763-5010).

The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office of Victims of Crime.

NCJ-106679
September 1987

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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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Introduction

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)—

- collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates statistical information on crime, victims of crime, criminal offenders, and operations of justice systems at all levels of government
- provides financial and technical support to State statistical and operating agencies
- analyzes national information policy on such issues as the privacy, confidentiality, and security of criminal justice data and the interstate exchange of criminal records.

In the 7 years since its creation, BJS has developed a program that responds to the diverse requirements of the 1979 Justice System Improvement Act and the 1984 Justice Assistance Act. These acts addressed more than half a century of recommendations calling for an independent and objective national center to provide basic information on crime to the President, the Congress, the judiciary, State and local governments, the general public, and the media.

In meeting its statutory mandate, BJS has developed more than two dozen data collection series using a variety of methods that include household interviews, censuses and sample surveys of criminal justice agencies and of prisoners and inmates, and compilations of administrative records.

BJS collects little raw data itself; rather, it designs collection programs and enters into agreements to collect data with other Federal agencies (such as the U.S. Bureau of the Census), private associations, and research organizations.

BJS reserves to itself the function of initial data analysis. This analysis is performed by the BJS staff of statisticians, criminologists, and social science analysts. BJS maintains this internal analytic capability to provide the Administration, Congress, the judiciary, and the public with timely and accurate data concerning problems of crime and the administration of justice in the Nation.

BJS prepared and disseminated 34 reports and data releases during fiscal 1986.

BJS Bulletins, begun in 1981, present data gleaned from its various statistical series. In a nontechnical format, each BJS Bulletin presents the latest information on particular aspects of crime or the administration of justice from the Bureau's ongoing statistical series.

BJS Special Reports, begun in February 1983, also are written in nontechnical language and aimed at a broad audience. Each Special Report focuses on a specific topic in criminal justice.

Each BJS Bulletin and BJS Special Report is announced in a press release summarizing the findings to ensure wide dissemination to policy makers and the public. Sometimes to expedite public communication, press releases alone are used to announce new BJS findings. During fiscal 1986, this method was used in April for the first release of 1985 victimization data and in September for the release of midyear prisoner counts.

Introduction

BJS press releases and reports have received extensive coverage in the electronic and print media and have been cited frequently in the editorial columns of the Nation's newspapers.

BJS also prepares and releases detailed tabulations from its data series. These reports, often running over a hundred pages, contain extensive cross tabulations of the variables covered in the BJS data collection series. They provide access to the full detail of BJS data to persons for whom it is impractical to work with the data tapes. The reports also explain data collection methodology, define terms, and include copies of any questionnaires used.

BJS Technical Reports address issues of statistical methodology and special topics in a more detailed and technical format than in a BJS Bulletin or BJS Special Report.

Each year BJS publishes its *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, which presents data from close to 100 different sources in a single, easy to use, reference volume.

In fiscal 1986, progress was made on the second edition of *Report to the nation on crime and justice*. A draft was circulated for external review with publication anticipated during 1987. The first edition was a major effort of BJS during fiscal 1983 and 1984. It was a landmark document in that it was the first attempt to describe comprehensively crime and the justice system in a nontechnical format. The first edition is now in its second printing, with nearly 75,000 copies sold or distributed.

The first edition of *Report to the nation* was awarded a first place prize in the 1984 Blue Pencil Competition of the National Association of Government Communicators in the category of general publications of over 16 pages. It also received an "award of excellence" in the 1984-85 Technical Communications Contest conducted by the Washington, D.C., Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

To supply summary information similar to what is contained in *Report to the nation* in years when it is not issued, *Crime and justice facts, 1985* was prepared and printed during the fiscal year. This 33-page document presents the most current data available from all the BJS statistical series.

BJS also disseminates statistical information by other methods. It responds to thousands of requests for data, both in writing and by telephone. The requests come from Federal, State, and local officials, the media, researchers, students, teachers, and members of the general public. The pamphlet *How to gain access to BJS data* describes the programs of the Bureau and the availability of data from the various BJS series. Each year, the Bureau also publishes *Telephone contacts*, which lists a wide range of topics in criminal justice and the names and telephone numbers of the BJS staff members most familiar with each topic.

To assist persons seeking crime and criminal justice data, BJS supports a staff member who specializes in statistical resources at the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. The BJS representative at NCJRS can be reached through a toll-free telephone number, 800-732-3277 (persons in Maryland and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area should dial 301-251-5500).

BJS distributes its reports through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). The Reference Service notifies those on its mailing list of forthcoming publications, and users return a form requesting copies of desired publications. Persons can obtain a registration form for the Reference Service mailing list or order a BJS report by writing to NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, or by calling 800-732-3277 (persons in Maryland and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area should dial 301-251-5500).

BJS sponsors the National Criminal Justice Data Archive at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan. The archive assists users whose needs are not satisfied by published statistics. All BJS data tapes (covering most of the BJS data series) and much other high-quality data are stored at the archive and are disseminated via magnetic tapes compatible with the user's computing facility. The archive can be reached by writing the National Criminal Justice Data Archive, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, 313-763-5010.

With BJS funding, a catalog and library of statistical reports produced by the State criminal justice statistical analysis centers are maintained by the Criminal Justice Statistics Association, 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 606, Washington, DC 20001, 202-347-4608.

BJS also supports the National Clearinghouse for Criminal Justice Information Systems, 925 Secret River Drive, Suite H, Sacramento, CA 95831, 916-392-2550. The clearinghouse—

- operates an automated index of over 1000 criminal justice information systems maintained by State and local governments throughout the Nation
- issues technical publications
- provides technical assistance and training for State and local government officials
- prepares the *Directory of automated criminal justice information systems*
- operates the computerized Criminal Justice Information Bulletin Board
- operates the National Criminal Justice Computer Laboratory and Training Center.

BJS reports on ...

Crime

The amount and nature of crime has become one of the main indicators by which Americans judge how well public officials are performing their jobs. These public officials, as well as criminologists and researchers, also monitor the crime rate to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at crime reduction. Because of the importance attached to changes in the crime rate, it is crucial that the Nation have available to it sound and accurate statistics measuring the amount and characteristics of crime over time.

The largest BJS statistical series is the National Crime Survey (NCS). This survey—

- provides the Nation's only systematic measurement of crime rates and the characteristics of crime and crime victims based on national household surveys
- measures the amount of rape, robbery, assault, personal larceny, household burglary and larceny, and motor vehicle theft experienced by a representative sample of the U.S. population
- provides detailed data about the characteristics of victims, victim-offender relationship, and the criminal incident, including the extent of loss or injury and whether the offense was reported to the police
- conducts interviews at 6-month intervals in about 49,000 U.S. households, asking 101,000 persons who are at least 12 years old what crimes they experienced since the last interview.

In April, BJS released preliminary findings of a continued downturn in victimization rates in 1985, to the lowest level in the 13-year history of the NCS. This report was released on the accelerated schedule, adopted in fiscal 1985, that has reduced the time between the reference year and the release date by 5 months. This earlier release results from methodological work aimed at rapid publication of the data.

In fiscal 1986, BJS released, for the sixth year, an NCS indicator that measures the proportion of American households touched by crime, *Households touched by crime, 1985* (BJS Bulletin, June 1986).

This indicator has revealed that victimization by crime is one of the most common negative life events that a family can suffer.

During the year, BJS completed the first phase of the National Crime Survey Redesign. In July, interviewers began using a questionnaire, revised to include a number of improvements in incident reporting, with a number of questions designed to elicit victims' experiences with the criminal justice system after their victimization. This questionnaire will remain in use until the second phase of changes is introduced in fiscal 1989.

BJS reports on . . .

Topical NCS reports released during fiscal 1986 included—

- *Reporting crimes to the police* (BJS Special Report, December 1985),
- *Locating city, suburban, and rural crime* (BJS Special Report, December 1985)
- *The use of weapons in committing crime* (BJS Special Report, January 1986)
- *Crime prevention measures* (BJS Special Report, March 1986)
- *Preventing domestic violence against women* (BJS Special Report, August 1986).

These reports frequently combine data over a number of years to provide enough sample cases to allow more indepth analysis than would be possible with a single year's data.

Also released during the year were—

- final 1984 NCS estimates in *Criminal victimization, 1984* (BJS Bulletin, October 1985)
- *National survey of crime severity* (BJS Final Report, October 1985)
- *Criminal victimization in the U.S., 1983* (BJS Final Report, October 1985).

A total of 10 reports on criminal victimization were produced in fiscal 1986.

Topical crime studies planned for fiscal 1987 include—

- Teenage victims
- Stranger and nonstranger crime
- Robbery
- Lifetime victimization
- Federal white-collar crime
- Trends in violent crime.

Crime trends

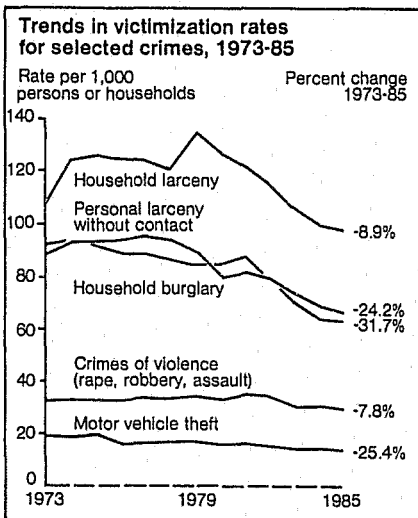
In 1985, criminal victimizations reached the lowest level in the 13-year history of the National Crime Survey. The 34.9 million criminal victimizations recorded in 1985 were about 16% below the 41.5 million recorded in the peak year of 1981.

Since 1981 the number of—

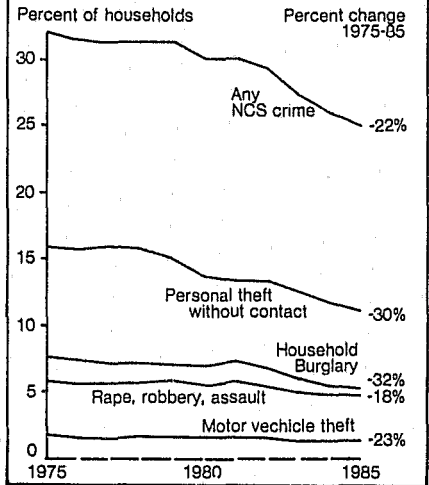
- violent crimes fell 12%
- personal thefts fell 15%
- household crimes fell 18%.

The 1985 victimization rates for—

- robberies fell 11% from the previous year to a new low about 32% below its peak in 1981
- personal theft fell by 3% from 1984 to 1985
- most other crimes, including all household crimes (burglary, household theft, and motor vehicle theft) were not measurably different in 1984 and 1985.



Households touched by selected crimes of violence and theft, 1975-85



In 1985, the percentage of U.S. households touched by crime fell to its lowest level in a decade: 25% of households suffered a robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, rape, assault, or theft vs. 32% in 1975.

Sources: *Criminal victimization 1985.*
Households touched by crime 1985.

The volume of crime

In 1985, the National Crime Survey reported 34.9 million victimizations:

	Number of victim- izations	Rate per 1,000 population*
Personal crimes		
—of violence	5,823,000	30.0
Rape	138,000	0.7
Robbery	985,000	5.1
Assault	4,699,000	24.2
Aggravated	1,605,000	8.3
Simple	3,094,000	15.9
—of theft	13,474,000	69.4
		Rate per 1,000 households
Household crimes		
Burglary	5,594,000	62.7
Larceny	8,703,000	97.5
Motor vehicle theft	1,270,000	14.2

*Rates per 1,000 population are for those age 12 and over.

In 1985, 22.2 million households—25% of all households—were touched by crime:

	Number of house- holds	Percent
Personal crimes		
—of violence	4,235,000	4.8%
Rape	125,000	.1
Robbery	842,000	.9
Assault	3,488,000	3.9
Aggravated	1,246,000	1.4
Simple	2,459,000	2.8
—of theft	10,233,000	11.5
Household crimes		
Burglary	4,713,000	5.3
Larceny	7,240,000	8.1
Motor vehicle theft	1,201,000	1.4

Sources: *Criminal victimization 1985.*
Households touched by crime 1985.

Violent crime

Each year about 3.2% of all Americans—6 million persons—are victims of violent crime.

Violent crime rates in 1984 were—

- highest against black males
- higher against blacks than whites or members of other minority groups
- higher against unemployed persons—whether male, female, white, or black—than against employed persons in their respective groups
- about 70% higher against males than against females
- lowest against white females.

Rates for crimes of violence and theft in 1984 were highest for young persons age 12 to 14.

The lifetime chances of being murdered are much higher for blacks than for whites: black males have 1 chance in 30 to be murdered; white males have 1 chance in 178.

Each year about 1 in 12 persons are victims of a violent crime. The risk of violent crime other than homicide is particularly high among males 16 to 24 years old and is about the same for whites and blacks in this age group.

Sources: *Criminal victimization 1984.*
The risk of violent crime.

Victims of crime

1984 victimization rates
(per 1,000 persons age 12 and over or households)

	Personal crimes		Household crimes
	Violence	Theft	
Sex			
Male	40	76	
Female	23	68	
Age			
12-15	53	120	417
16-19	68	120	
20-24	64	114	
25-34	37	84	248
35-49	21	63	197
50-64	10	40	137
65 and over	5	20	88
Race			
White	30	72	172
Black	41	68	232
Other	25	70	181
Origin			
Hispanic	38	64	255
Non-Hispanic	31	72	174
Income			
Less than \$7,500	49	66	211
\$7,500-9,999	35	66	185
\$10,000-14,999	33	66	183
\$15,000-24,999	29	69	169
\$25,000-29,999	25	71	171
\$30,000-49,999	26	83	176
\$50,000 or more	24	98	193
Residence			
Central city	43	85	238
1,000,000 or more	45	80	217
500,000-999,999	45	92	239
250,000-499,999	37	88	256
50,000-249,999	44	81	246
Suburban	30	77	169
Rural	22	54	136

Source: *Criminal victimization 1984*.

Rates for crimes of theft in 1984 were higher against Hispanics than against non-Hispanics.

Victimization rates for all three major household crimes (burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft) were higher against members of households headed by blacks than against members of households headed by whites or members of other minority groups combined.

Based on the number of vehicles owned, motor vehicle theft rates were higher against heads of black households than against whites or members of other minority groups.

Household victimization rates increased as the size of the household increased: Persons living in households with six or more persons experienced a higher total victimization rate than individuals in smaller households.

Teenage victimization rates for violent crime and theft were about twice as high as those of the adult population ages 20 and older. Younger teens (ages 12-15) had lower violent crime rates than older teens (ages 16-19); yet, both groups had similar theft rates.

Sources: *Criminal victimization in the United States 1984. The risk of violent crime. Teenage victims.*

The relationship between victim and offender

Most violent crimes are committed by persons who are strangers to their victims. From 1982-84 strangers committed—

- 57% of all crimes of violence, including 11% known by sight only
- three-fourths of robberies, including 6% known by sight only
- more than half of assaults and rapes, including those known by sight only.

Most violent crimes by strangers (70%) were committed against males; most crimes by relatives (77%) were committed against females.

The percentage of violent crimes involving strangers varied only slightly between white and black victims.

Violent crime has intra- as well as inter-racial aspects:

- 79% of violent crimes against whites were committed by whites
- 81% of violent crimes against blacks were committed by blacks
- 96% of violent crimes by whites were against whites
- 54% of violent crimes by blacks were against whites.

Sources: *Violent crime by strangers and nonstrangers. Criminal victimization in the United States, 1984.*

The use of weapons in crime

Armed offenders were responsible for 24 million victimizations during the period 1973-82, accounting for 37% of all violent victimizations.

Half of all robberies, a third of all assaults, and a fourth of all rapes or attempted rapes were committed by armed criminals.

Guns were involved in 13% of the violent crimes, knives in 11%, other weapons in 13%, and unknown types of weapons in 2%.

The offender fired a gun in about 25% of the violent crimes that involved only firearms. Assaultants armed only with knives cut or attempted to cut about 22% of their victims. Victims were shot in 4% of all violent victimizations; they were cut or stabbed in 10%.

A greater proportion of offenses were completed by armed than by unarmed offenders:

	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Attempted</u>
Rape		
By armed offender	49%	51%
By unarmed offender	28	72
Robbery		
By armed offender	73	21
By unarmed offender	57	43

Victims of unarmed offenders were injured 30% of the time. Victims of offenders armed—

- with guns were less likely to be injured than were the victims of offenders armed with other weapons
- only with guns were injured 14% of the time
- only with knives were injured 25% of the time
- only with other weapons (such as sticks, rocks, bottles) were injured 45% of the time.

Victims injured by offenders with guns or knives were more likely than ones injured by offenders with other weapons or ones injured by unarmed offenders to require medical attention or to require hospital treatment.

Among victims who reported hospital stays of one night or longer, the average stay was—

- 16.3 days for those injured by guns
- 7.2 days for those injured by knives
- 8.2 days for those injured by other weapons
- 6.6 days for those injured by unarmed offenders.

Offenders armed with guns or other weapons were more likely than ones armed only with knives or unarmed offenders to victimize more than one person in the same incident.

Source: The use of weapons in committing crimes.

The location of crime

City residents were about twice as likely as rural residents to be victims of violent crime during 1983.

1983 victimization rates per 1,000 population

<u>Place of residence</u>	<u>Crimes of— violence</u>	<u>theft</u>
All areas	31.0	76.9
Central cities	43.3	92.0
Suburban areas	29.4	82.0
Rural areas	22.4	57.7

Most crimes against city, suburban, and rural residents occurred in the general area where the victims lived. Yet, suburban dwellers were more likely to be victims of violent crimes within the city limits of the central cities of their metropolitan areas (12%) than were city dwellers to become victims in the suburban areas surrounding their cities (5%).

Almost 95% of the violent crimes against people who live in cities with 1 million or more inhabitants occurred in the city itself, whereas about 66% of the violent crimes against residents of suburbs of such cities occurred in the suburbs of the same city.

Robbery and personal larceny with contact (purse snatching and pocket picking) were especially likely to occur in cities:

- city residents victimized by these crimes were almost always victimized in their own areas (94% and 95%, respectively)
- many suburban victims of these crimes were victimized in city settings (31% and 35%, respectively)
- people living in small towns and rural areas reported that a higher proportion of these crimes occurred in metropolitan areas than was so for other personal crimes.

Source: Locating city, suburban, and rural crime.

Crime against District of Columbia residents and Capitol Hill employees

Victimization rates of residents of the District of Columbia (DC) and of its Maryland and Virginia suburbs were compared: DC residents were more likely than suburban residents to be robbed but were less likely to be victims of vandalism.

The study found the following crime victim rates per 1,000 population age 12 and over:

	<u>DC residents</u>	<u>Suburban residents</u>
Robbery	29	12
Personal vandalism	12	30
Household vandalism	16	35

With one exception, victimization rates did not differ significantly between Capitol Hill employees and other employed people in the DC area. The single exception was larceny without contact, where Capitol Hill employees had a higher overall rate.

The following rates were found:

	<u>Capitol Hill employees</u>	<u>Other employed people</u>
Violent crime		
Robbery	14	18
Assault	32	36
Threats	23	23
Property crime		
Larceny with contact	58	62
Larceny without contact	135	106
Personal vandalism	39	31

Source: *Criminal victimization of District of Columbia residents and Capitol Hill employees: Summary.*

Characteristics of various types of crime

Information on the characteristics of completed and attempted criminal events can help the public take actions to avoid crime. For example, many burglaries can be avoided by simply keeping doors locked.

BJS periodically publishes reports from the National Crime Survey on the characteristics of specific types of crimes. For example, an August 1986 Special Report examined domestic violence against women. In earlier years, crimes such as rape and burglary were the topics of special reports. Topics scheduled for analysis during fiscal 1987 include robbery and stranger and nonstranger violent crime.

Other data describing crime characteristics are collected under the Federal Justice Statistics Program. During fiscal 1986, the prototype for an annual compendium of Federal justice statistics was developed describing characteristics of both criminal and civil offenses. The initial compendium will be released in fiscal 1987. In addition, data from the previously completed study on electronic fund transfer systems fraud, as set out in *Electronic fund transfer systems fraud* (BJS Final Report, April 1986) were made available in response to numerous public inquiries. During fiscal 1987 a report will be prepared and published on Federal white-collar crime.

Domestic violence against women

From 1978 to 1982 the National Crime Survey showed that once a woman was victimized by domestic violence, her risk of being victimized again was substantial. During a 6-month period following an incident of domestic violence, close to 32% of the women were victimized again.

About a third of the incidents of domestic violence against women in the NCS would be classified by police as "rape," "robbery," or "aggravated assault." These are felonies in most States. The other two-thirds would likely be classified by police as "simple assaults," a misdemeanor in most jurisdictions. Yet, as many as half of these actually involved bodily injury as serious or more serious than 90% of all rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.

Seven out of ten incidents of domestic violence in the NCS were committed by the woman's spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend:

All cases of domestic violence	100%
Relatives	
Spouse	40
Ex-spouse	19
Parent or child	1
Sibling	2
Other relative	3
Close friends	
Boyfriend or ex-boyfriend	10
Friend	9
Other nonrelative	16

An estimated 52% of all incidents of domestic violence were brought to police attention. Calling the police following the violence seems to reduce the risk of a husband attacking his wife again within 6 months by as much as 62%.

Source: Preventing domestic violence against women.

Rape

During the 10 years 1973-82, there were about 1.5 million rapes or attempted rapes in the United States.

Among rape and attempted rape victims—

- close to three-quarters are unmarried women
- two-thirds are under 25
- about half are from low-income families
- four-fifths are white, but compared to their proportion in the general population black women are significantly more likely than white women to be victims.

Two thirds of all rapes and attempted rapes occur at night—the highest proportion between 6 p.m. and midnight.

About half the cases of rape or attempted rape are reported to the police. The reasons most often given for not reporting a rape or attempted rape to the police or other authorities are that—

- the incident was too private or personal
- the victim felt the police would be insensitive or ineffective.

Victims who said they did report the rape to the police most often said that they did so—

- to keep it from happening again or to others
- to punish the offender.

Over four-fifths of the rape victims reported that they took self-protective measures, including reasoning with the offender, fleeing from the offender, screaming or yelling for help, hitting, kicking, or scratching the offender, and using or brandishing a weapon.

Sources: The crime of rape. Criminal victimization in the United States, 1984.

Household burglary

Burglars commit three-fifths of all rapes and robberies in the home and a third of all household assaults. During the 10 years from 1973-82, 2.8 million violent crimes occurred during the course of burglaries, even though the vast majority of burglaries occur when no household member is present.

Someone is at home during 13% of all burglaries, and 30% of such incidents end in a violent crime.

Among all cases of burglary—

- a third are forcible entries
- in 22%, force is used unsuccessfully in an attempt to gain entry
- 45% are unlawful entries in which the intruder has no legal right to be on the premises and no force is used to enter the premises.

Theft is involved in—

- 77% of all forcible entries
- 82% of unlawful entries where no force is used to gain entry.

Housing units most likely to be burglarized are rented rather than owned and are in multi-unit dwellings containing 3 to 9 units.

Urban households are more likely than suburban or rural households to be victims of forcible entries. However, for unlawful entry where force is not used to gain entry, the rates in urban, suburban, and rural households are very similar.

Burglary occurs more often in warmer than in colder months.

When the time of entry is known, victims of burglary report that about half the incidents occurred during daytime and half occurred at night.

Sources: Household burglary, Criminal victimization in the United States, 1984.

Bank robbery

Bank robberies—

- jumped from less than 500 per year prior to the 1960s to about 8,000 in 1980, increasing at a far faster rate than total robberies
- account for about 6% of all commercial robberies reported to Federal, State, and local authorities in 1982.

Of bank robberies investigated by the FBI that were studied—

- slightly more than 6% involved violence
- injuries occurred in slightly more than 2%
- death occurred in less than half of 1%.

Most bank robbers appear to be unsophisticated, unprofessional criminals:

- 76% of them used no disguise despite the widespread use of surveillance equipment
- 86% never inspected the bank prior to the offense
- 95% had no long-range scheme to avoid capture and to spend the money without being noticed.

The average dollar loss from bank robberies was about \$3,300. In 1979, less than 20% of the amounts stolen were recovered.

Unlike other crimes, bank robbery is almost always detected and almost always reported. About two of three bank robberies are cleared by arrest.

Of persons prosecuted for bank robbery—

- most had histories of prior arrest, convictions, and incarcerations
- 45% had served at least one prior term in excess of 1 year.

Source: *Bank robbery: Federal offenses and offenders.*

Automated teller machine loss and theft

The Nation's banks lost an estimated \$70 million to \$100 million from automated teller machine (ATM) frauds in 1983.

That year about \$262 billion were processed through 2.7 billion teller machine transactions. Of a sample study of 2,700 transactions that prompted an account holder complaint, about 45% appeared to involve fraud.

Of problem incidents studied, almost two-thirds involved withdrawals, almost a third of which were with a stolen or lost card.

To prevent unauthorized access, most automatic tellers require identification by a card and a personal identification number. According to the card holders, the personal identification number of the cards that were used in ATM loss or theft was—

- recorded and kept near the card—typically in the purse or wallet—in 72% of the cases
- written on the card in 6% of the cases
- written and kept separate from the card or purse in 7%
- not written anywhere in 15% of the cases.

Sources: *Electronic fund transfer fraud. Electronic fund transfer fraud: Computer crime.*

Drugs, alcohol, and crime

Evidence increasingly points to a link between drugs and the commission of crime because crime is—

- a frequent characteristic of the drug business
- an activity engaged in by drug users.

Abundant data from BJS surveys show the extent of drug and alcohol use by prison and jail inmates at the time of the offense for which they are incarcerated and at other times in their lives.

- During the year, the first release of data from the 1983 National Jail Inmate Survey was made in *Jail inmates, 1983* (BJS Bulletin, November 1985), including extensive information on drug and alcohol use.
- Also during the year, the 1986 National Prisoner Survey was conducted. The results of that survey will be published during fiscal 1987, including analysis of prisoner drug and alcohol use.
- A major BJS Special Report on the arrest, prosecution, and sentencing of drug offenders is scheduled for fiscal 1987.

Drug use is not only a health problem in this country, but the use of drugs by otherwise lawabiding citizens supports illegal drug trafficking and the crime associated with it. BJS's *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics* annually presents the most current data available on self-reported drug use.

Just before committing the crime for which they were imprisoned—

- almost a third of State prisoners in 1979 and nearly a half of the convicted jail inmates in 1983 reported that they had drunk very heavily
- almost a third of State prisoners and a quarter of convicted jail inmates said they had been under the influence of an illegal drug
- three-fifths of the State prisoners who were under the influence of drugs had also been drinking.

A quarter of the interviewed State prison inmates said that they had drunk very heavily almost every day for the entire year before they entered prison.

More than half the State prisoners said they had taken illegal drugs during the month before committing the crime.

Three-fourths of all jail inmates reported using illegal drugs at some time in their lives:

- 72% reported using marijuana
- 38% used cocaine
- 32% used amphetamines and 27% barbiturates (methaqualone, LSD, and heroin had each been used by more than a fifth of the inmates).

Drug use among jail inmates was more pervasive in 1983 than in 1978. In 1978 two-thirds of the inmates reported drug use histories vs. three-quarters in 1983.

The proportion of jail inmates ever using heroin dropped from 1978–83, but the proportion ever using cocaine and marijuana rose.

Habitual offenders and persons convicted of assault, burglary, or rape were more likely than other State prisoners to have been very heavy drinkers. Alcohol was most likely to have been used by jail inmates convicted of public-order offenses and violent offenses, particularly manslaughter and assault.

Among State prisoners, drug offenders and burglars were the most likely to have been under the influence of drugs at the time of the offense. Among jail inmates, the most likely to have been under such influence were drug offenders and property offenders.

Among prison inmates, whites, males, and persons between ages 18 and 25 are especially likely to have been very heavy drinkers.

Male prison inmates are somewhat more likely than female inmates to use drugs. However, the proportion who use heroin is somewhat greater among women than among men.

The BJS-sponsored National Survey of Crime Severity asked a nationally representative sample of persons in 1977 to rank the seriousness of 204 criminal events. Results of that survey demonstrate that the American public views drug trafficking very seriously:

- running a narcotics ring is ranked 10th out of 204 crimes, higher than a skyjacking, a rape requiring hospitalization, the intentional shooting of a victim, or many other serious violent crimes

- selling heroin to another person for resale ranks 28th, and smuggling heroin into the country ranks 32nd, each of which ranks higher than a husband beating his wife so that she requires hospitalization, a knife stabbing, an armed bank robbery of \$100,000, or robbery of a small amount of money in which the victim is injured and hospitalized

- each of the six drug trafficking items on the survey ranked in the top 50% of the seriousness scale; the lower ranking items included trafficking in illegal barbiturates and marijuana.

Drug use and careers in crime appear to be related. The more convictions inmates had on their records, the more likely they were to have taken drugs in the month prior to committing the crime for which they were incarcerated:

- three-fifths of State prison inmates in 1979 with five or more prior convictions had used drugs in the prior month, compared with two-fifths of those with no prior convictions
- the proportion of inmates who had used heroin in the previous month was three times higher for those with five or more prior convictions than for those with no prior convictions.

BJS reports on . . .

A study of Federal offenders found that those who use drugs (particularly those who use heroin) tend to—

- have worse criminal records than other Federal offenders
- commit subsequent crimes, both drug and nondrug, at a higher rate than Federal offenders who do not use illegal drugs.

The number of—

- drug law violators convicted in Federal district courts rose from 1,400 in 1964 to 8,000 in 1976, declined to 4,700 in 1980, and rose to 6,300 in 1982
- criminal actions filed against drug violators in Federal courts decreased from 7,819 in 1978 to 6,678 in 1980 but increased to 8,149 in 1981 and 9,085 in 1982—a rise of more than 35% in the number of filings against drug violators between 1980 and 1982.

The typical accused Federal drug law offender is a male about age 30, most likely to be white, with a 7% chance of opiate use or addiction and a 14% chance of current or past abuse of other drugs. Persons charged with drug possession tend to be younger than those charged with the sale of drugs and to be less well educated, less often married, less wealthy, and less often repeat offenders than persons charged with other drug offenses. Illegal drug producers tended to be the oldest of all.

The data on Federal drug law violators show that—

- of offenders convicted of charges carrying a 15-year statutory maximum term, about 85% received sentences of 5 years or less

- on average, drug offenders actually served only 75% of sentence time
- the actual time served by incarcerated drug offenders, at least 89% of whom were involved in drug crimes more serious than simple possession, averaged slightly more than 3 years
- convicted Federal drug law violators received prison terms half as long as convicted bank robbers and served nearly 2 years less time in prison than the bank robbers.

As presented in the BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*—

- 54.9% of 1984 high school seniors reported having ever used marijuana/hashish
- 16.1% reported having ever used cocaine
- 1.3% reported having ever used heroin.

Reported illegal drug use of high school seniors, 1984

Drug	Used within the last—	
	12 months	30 days
Marijuana/hashish	40.0%	25.2%
Inhalants	7.9	2.7
Hallucinogens	7.9	3.6
Cocaine	11.6	5.8
Heroin	0.5	0.3
Other opiates	5.2	1.8
Sedatives	6.6	2.3
Tranquilizers	6.1	2.1

Sources: *Prisoners and alcohol. Prisoners and drugs. The severity of crime. Federal drug law violators. Jail inmates, 1983.* Lloyd D. Johnson, et al., *Use of licit and illicit drugs by America's high school students, 1975-84* as reported in *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1985.*

The cost of crime

One of the questions most often asked of BJS by policy makers, the media, and members of the general public is "What is the total cost of crime to society?"

In all likelihood, there will never be a simple answer to this seemingly simple question for a variety of reasons:

- Many costs to society of criminal activity cannot be measured directly. These include monies that might have been channeled into legal purchases if they had not been diverted for illegal purposes such as gambling, drug purchases, and prostitution. Organized crime, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration result in economic losses to society, but these defy direct measurement. Also difficult to measure are the losses from fraudulent activities that the victims are embarrassed to report.
- Some of the costs of crime to society are not quantifiable. These include nonmonetary costs to victims, such as pain and suffering from injury, psychological distress, fear, and similar effects on victims and their families and friends.

However, BJS does measure some components of the cost of crime to society. One source is the National Crime Survey, which measures the value of property stolen or damaged through criminal incidents and the cost of medical care resulting from victimization.

Another cost of crime to society is that of operating the criminal justice system. In fiscal 1986, a second annual overview report on the cost of the criminal justice system and on employment in criminal justice—using a revised, less expensive methodology—was issued in *Justice expenditure and employment 1983* (BJS Bulletin, July 1986). Now that the revised methodology is firmly established, the gap between reference date and publication date can be shortened. A detailed report on total criminal justice system expenditure and employment was prepared during the year; it presents extensive tabulations of data for 1982 and 1983.

The collection of fiscal 1985 data on costs of the justice system was completed during the year, using a methodology that will provide substantive and geographic data in greater detail. The content and coverage of these data will be similar to data gathered for 1971–79. The results will be published in fiscal 1987.

A special analysis of long-term trends in municipal spending for police services was completed during the year and the results were published in *Police employment and expenditure trends* (BJS Special Report, February 1986). This report examined expenditure data from 1938 to 1982 and employment data from 1954 to 1982 for 88 cities over 100,000 population.

Economic cost of crime to victims

Total economic loss to victims of personal and household crimes, 1984*

Type of crime	Gross loss (millions)
All crimes	\$12,473
Personal crimes	3,404
—of violence	883
Rape	20
Robbery	539
Assault	324
—of theft	2,521
Personal larceny:	
with contact	64
without contact	2,457
Household crimes	9,068
Burglary	3,523
Household larceny	1,385
Motor vehicle theft	4,160

*Includes losses from property theft or damage, cash losses, medical expenses, and lost pay due to victimization (including time spent with the police in investigation and in court and time spent in replacing lost property), and other crime-related costs.

A study of 1981 NCS data found that—

- nearly 75% of the cost stemmed from the three household crimes: burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft
- among the three violent crimes (assault, robbery, rape), the largest loss resulted from robbery
- the median loss for a violent crime victim was twice as high as for a personal theft victim; motor vehicle theft gave rise to the highest median loss for all crimes
- most losses were from theft of property or cash (92%); 6% are from property damage and 2% from medical expenses
- about 65% of the medical costs result from assault—the most common of the three violent crimes

- 36% of all losses were recovered or reimbursed within 6 months after the offense
- median losses from personal and household crimes were greater for black than for white victims.

Sources: *The economic cost of crime to victims. Criminal victimization in the United States, 1984.*

Cost of the justice system

Federal, State, and local spending for all civil and criminal justice activities in fiscal 1983 was \$39.7 billion—less than 3% of all government spending in this country:

Government spending by activity

Social insurance payments	22.0%
National defense and international relations	16.9
Education	13.1
Interest on debt	9.8
Public welfare	6.2
Housing and the environment	5.4
Hospitals and health	4.2
Transportation	3.4
Justice	2.9
Space research and technology	0.5

Government spending (including both direct and intergovernmental expenditures):

- Local \$23.2 billion
- State \$12.8 billion
- Federal \$4.9 billion.

Of each justice dollar—

- 52¢ was spent on police protection
- 22¢ on the courts and other legal activities
- 26¢ on prisons and other correctional costs.

Less than 1 cent of every dollar spent by the Federal, State, and local governments went into operation of the Nation's correctional system (including jails, prisons, probation, and parole).

Total government spending on civil and criminal justice was \$170 per person in 1983. State and local per capita spending varies greatly by State:

- West Virginia, Mississippi, and Arkansas spent the least (less than \$80 per person)
- the most was spent by New York (\$220), Nevada (\$278), Alaska (\$534), and the District of Columbia (\$552).

The percentage of direct expenditure for civil and criminal justice varies by level of government:

- 0.6% Federal
- 5.0% State
- 14.2% County
- 10.5% Cities and towns
- 6.2% State and local combined.

1983 justice expenditures were up 10.7% from the previous year, rising slightly faster than the 9.5% increase in total government spending.

Among types of justice spending, corrections increased the most—by 15.1% from 1982–83. From 1980–83, corrections spending increased by 50.9%.

The police share of total city budgets increased steadily from 8% in 1940 to 14% in 1980 in 88 cities with over 100,000 population in 1980.

Per capita spending during 1940–80 for police was 1.5 to 2 times higher for these large cities in the Northeast than for those in the West, Midwest, and South.

Cities with the highest crime rates spend more per capita for police protection than do cities with lower crime rates, but there is little difference in per capita spending between the cities with the lowest and those with the next to lowest crime rates.

Sources: Justice expenditure and employment, 1983. Police employment and expenditure trends.

The public response to crime

The public's response to crime includes—

- decisions of individual victims on whether to report the crime to the police
- actions taken by victims (and their family and friends) in response to crime (such as attempting to minimize the risk of future victimizations through changes in behavior, purchase of burglar alarms, and guard dogs)
- similar actions taken by strangers who read or hear of crime through media accounts or other sources
- an increase (or decrease) in fear of crime
- changes in opinions on the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the criminal justice system.

The National Crime Survey measures the extent to which and why victims have reported victimizations to the police. In fiscal 1986, BJS issued an indepth study of these data, *Reporting crimes to the police* (BJS Special Report, December 1985). Another analysis of NCS data studied domestic violence and the effect that reporting it to the police had on recurrence; these results were released in *Preventing domestic violence against women* (BJS Special Report, August 1986).

Also during the year, an analysis was made of a special one-time supplement to the NCS called the 1984 Victim Risk Supplement. This supplement collected information about crime prevention measures taken at home and at the workplace and about the individuals' perceptions of the safety of their homes, neighborhoods, and places of work. The results of this study were released in *Crime prevention measures* (BJS Special Report, March 1986).

Public opinion polls by organizations such as Gallup, ABC News, and the National Opinion Research Center ask questions about how fearful people are of crime and about their confidence in criminal justice agencies. Data from these polls are assembled in the annual BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*. Care should be taken in using such data, particularly when comparing data from different polls where the wording or ordering of questions may be different and could influence results.

Preventing crime

About a third of all households reported in 1984 taking one or more of these crime prevention measures:

Engraving valuables	25%
Neighborhood watch	7
Burglar alarm	7

Black and white households are equally likely to take at least one of these measures.

The higher the household income the more likely it is that the home has a burglar alarm. One in six families with incomes of \$50,000 or more have one; this is twice the rate of families with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and three times that of families with incomes less than \$25,000.

Almost a fifth of all families live in communities that have neighborhood watch programs and, of these, about 38% of the families participate in these programs.

Households in areas with neighborhood watch programs and those participating in such programs vary with income:

<u>Household income</u>	<u>Percent with programs</u>	<u>Percent participating</u>
Less than \$7,500	14%	4%
\$7,500-9,999	14	5
\$10,000-14,999	16	6
\$15,000-24,999	19	7
\$25,000-29,999	22	9
\$30,000-49,999	25	11
\$50,000 or more	30	15

One in four urban families lives in a neighborhood with a crime watch program as do one in five suburban families and one in eight families who live outside metropolitan areas.

Of the households surveyed, 20% had at least one of these features:

- a fence or barricade at the entrance
- a doorkeeper, guard, or receptionist
- an intercom or phone for gaining entrance to the building
- surveillance cameras
- bars on windows or doors
- signs indicating alarms or security devices
- other warning signs, such as "beware of the dog."

Percent of respondents who reported at least one security measure at work:

<u>Security measure</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Receptionist or guard who checks people in	42%
Burglar alarm system	33
Police or guard for protection	30
Pass or ID required for entrance	19
Locked entry during work hours	16
Surveillance camera	16
Guard dog	2

Source: *Crime prevention measures.*

Reporting crime

The criminal justice system deals directly with a very small amount of crime. Only about a third of all crimes are reported to the police:

- the crimes most serious in terms of economic loss or injury are the crimes most likely to be reported; nearly half of all violent crimes are reported, but only a fourth of the personal crimes of theft and a third of household crimes are reported
- the most frequently reported crimes (excluding murder) are motor vehicle theft (69%) and aggravated assault (58%).

Generally, demographic characteristics (sex, age, race) of the victims make less difference in reporting rates than does the type of crime.

Most crimes are reported by the victim or a member of the victimized household:

- of reported personal crimes, 60% are reported by the victim, 13% by another household member, and 22% by someone else; 3% are discovered by the police
- of reported household crimes, 88% are reported by a household member and 10% by someone else; 2% are discovered by the police.

To keep the crime from happening again was the reason most often given for reporting a violent crime to the police. The desire to recover property was the reason most often given for reporting both personal theft and household crimes.

The reason most often given for *not* reporting was that the crime was not important enough to be reported to the police. For violent crimes, it was that the matter was private or personal.

Almost half of all cases of domestic violence reported by women in NCS surveys for 1978-82 were not reported to the police.

Calling the police about an act of domestic violence seems to reduce the risk of a husband attacking his wife again within 6 months by as much as 62%. During 1978-82, 41% of the married women who were attacked by their husbands but did not call the police were assaulted again within an average of 6 months, but only 15% of the women who did call the police were attacked again.

Sources: Reporting crimes to the police. Preventing domestic violence against women.

Fear of crime

In 1984, the National Crime Survey included a "Victim Risk Supplement." Of the persons asked—

- about 32% said they felt their neighborhood was very safe from crime
- 59% said their neighborhood was fairly safe
- 10% said it was unsafe.

More than 90% of the people asked said they felt very or fairly safe at their workplace.

As presented in the 1984 BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, 16% of respondents to a 1983 Gallup poll said they felt unsafe when asked, "How about at home at night—do you feel safe and secure, or not?" This percentage has remained about the same when asked in 1972 (17%), 1975 (19%), 1977 (15%), and 1981 (16%).

Feeling unsafe at home at night was more likely to be reported in 1983 by—

- females (20%) than by males (11%)
- people in large cities than by those in smaller cities and rural areas
- blacks and other nonwhites (23%) than by whites (14%).

In that same poll, 45% of respondents said "yes" when asked "Is there any area right around here—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" (This percentage was about the same during the 1970's, but it is an increase over the 34% and 31% reported when the question was asked in 1965 and 1967.)

Presented in the 1985 *Sourcebook* were the results of a 1984 Media General/Associated Press Poll. In that poll, the following percentages of respondents reported being concerned about—

Someone forcing his way into your home and stealing your possessions	61%
Someone robbing or mugging you on the street	49
Someone raping you or a family member	62

Sources: *Crime prevention measures*. Gallup Report and Gallup Opinion Index, as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1984*. Media General/Associated Press Poll, as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1985*.

Public confidence in the criminal justice system

As presented in the 1985 BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, 88% of the respondents to a 1985 Gallup Poll rated the honesty and ethical standards of policemen as average or higher than average. Similar ratings were given when the same question was asked in 1977, 1981, and 1983.

The 1984 *Sourcebook* presented data from a 1982 ABC News Poll that asked a national sample if someone in their household had called the police in the past year. Of 35% saying yes—

- 72% said the police responded within a "short time"
- 22% said the police arrived a "long time" after they were called
- 4% volunteered a response of "somewhere in between"
- 2% didn't know.

The same poll asked how much confidence respondents had in the police to prevent crimes such as robberies from happening and how much confidence they had in the police to solve such crimes after they had happened:

	Confidence in the ability of the police—	
	To prevent crimes	To solve crimes
All respondents	100%	100%
Great deal	18	14
Good amount	43	46
Very little	33	34
None at all	5	5
No opinion, refused	1	1

The 1985 *Sourcebook* presented the results of a 1984 poll conducted by the the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). That poll asked respondents to a national survey, "In general, do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?" They responded as follows:

Too harshly	3%
Not harshly enough	82
About right	11
Don't know	4

This question has been asked for more than a decade. During this time—

- a decreasing percentage felt that the courts were dealing too harshly with criminals (6% in 1972 to 3% in 1984)
- an increasing percentage felt the courts were not dealing harshly enough (66% in 1972 to 82% in 1984)
- however, the current levels were reached in the mid-to late 1970's and have been relatively stable ever since.

Sources: ABC News Poll as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1984*. Gallup Reports and the National Opinion Research Center poll as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1985*.

Adjudication and sentencing

Policy makers and the public are particularly concerned about—

- what happens to accused offenders when charges are brought against them and their cases are heard in court?
- are they released on "technicalities?"
- are they allowed to plead guilty to lesser charges and thus not receive the full measure of legal sanctions due to them for the crimes they have committed?
- do they delay court proceedings through legal maneuverings that discourage witnesses and victims from continued participation in the prosecution?
- are the sentences received by convicted offenders consistent with the seriousness of the offenses they have committed?

Methods of case processing and terminology vary across the country. Consequently, much of the information on this phase of criminal justice is based on studies of limited numbers of jurisdictions.

Of major importance in fiscal 1986 was the continuation of several methodological projects directed toward development of nationally representative court case-processing and outcome data and improved data on other aspects of the judicial phase of criminal justice.

One source of data on local prosecution is the management information systems maintained by prosecutors in jurisdictions throughout the country. The BJS-sponsored Prosecution of Felony Arrests Project obtains case processing data from such systems in some jurisdictions:

- It collects information on case attrition, guilty pleas, final dispositions, and case processing time.
- In fiscal 1986, *Felony case processing time* (BJS Special Report, August 1986), covering 12 mostly urban jurisdictions, was published.
- Also in fiscal 1986, final reports covering 2 years of prosecutor data were published: *Prosecution of felony arrests, 1980* (BJS Final Report, October 1985) and *Prosecution of felony arrests, 1981* (BJS Final Report, September 1986).
- The number of jurisdictions participating in this project has grown from 13 supplying 1977 data to 28 providing 1980 data and 37 submitting 1981 data.

The Felony Sentencing Outcomes Project produced *Felony sentencing in 18 local jurisdictions* (BJS Special Report, June 1985) in fiscal 1985.

- In fiscal 1986 this project was expanded to cover more than 30 jurisdictions.
- Data are being collected for 50,000 to 55,000 felony court sentences for the offenses of homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, drug trafficking, and arson.
- The project will study the use of different kinds and degrees of sanctions and will examine the impact on sentencing patterns of such factors as crime severity, different types of sentencing systems, the number of conviction offenses, and the use of pleas vs. trials.

A third adjudication project being conducted for BJS is a major study of burglars and robbers brought to the attention of local prosecutors in some 30 of the Nation's largest counties. In fiscal 1986, data collection was completed at three sites. Data collection at seven others is planned for fiscal 1987. The study describes the impact of different policies and practices on the disposition and sentencing outcomes of robbery and burglary cases.

A major priority in fiscal 1986 was continued development of the Integrated Federal Justice Data Base under the Federal Justice Statistics Program.

- This data base traces Federal case processing from investigation through prosecution, adjudication, and corrections.
- It includes input from the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, United States Attorneys, United States Courts, and the Bureau of Prisons.
- This is the first time that such Federal justice data have been brought together in a single data series.
- Two reports planned for fiscal 1987 are on Federal white-collar crime and on Federal sentencing and time served.

During the year, BJS continued its recently expanded program of analyzing Offender-Based Transaction Statistics data from States having such systems.

- The OBTS systems follow offenders from arrest through final disposition.
- In fiscal 1986, BJS analyzed State OBTS data on the white-collar crimes of forgery/counterfeiting, fraud, and embezzlement.
- Eight States and one territory were able to supply data: California, Minnesota,

Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, and the Virgin Islands.

- The data were analyzed during the year and published in early fiscal 1987 in *Tracking offenders—White-collar crime* (BJS Special Report, November 1986).

During the year, analysis continued of the results of the first national survey of public defense systems in 10 years. This analysis culminated in detailed tabulations that were published in early fiscal 1987 in *National criminal defense systems study* (BJS Final Report, October 1986).

Prison admissions and releases, 1983 (BJS Special Report, March 1986) contained data on sentences received and served by prison inmates.

Local prosecution

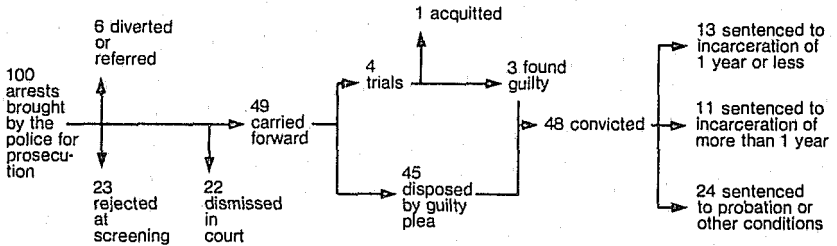
Differences in local laws, agencies, resources, standards, and procedures result in varying responses to crime in each jurisdiction:

- for example, among 16 jurisdictions supplying data for 1981, two reject no cases prior to filing because the police file cases directly with the court
- across the other jurisdictions the rejection rate ranged from 3% to 47%.

A high rate of rejections at screening is the result of a conscious policy on the part of the prosecutor to weed out weak cases before they enter the court system. In general—

- jurisdictions with high screening rates have low dismissal rates
- those with low screening rates have high dismissal rates.

Typical outcome of 100 felony arrests brought by the police for prosecution, 1981



Most felony arrests do not result in a trial:

- from a third to more than half of all arrests are rejected at screening or dismissed
- most of the rest result in a guilty plea.

Evidence-related deficiencies and witness problems—

- account for more than half of rejections at screening
- are also common reasons for dismissals.

Guilty pleas rather than trials account for most felony convictions (an average of 88% of the 1981 felony convictions across the 27 jurisdictions providing data).

The use of guilty pleas in felony cases varies greatly among jurisdictions:

- some jurisdictions have policies that result in a high rate of guilty pleas
- others go to trial more frequently.

Most guilty pleas are to the most serious charge filed by the prosecutor: In 11 of 16 jurisdictions providing data, close to 60% or more of the guilty pleas were to the top charge.

Few cases are brought to trial: On average, 4 of every 100 arrests went to trial in 1981.

Defendants charged with serious crimes are more likely than those with less serious charges to demand a trial.

Most trials by jury result in conviction:

- of 26 jurisdictions providing data for 1981, an average of 73% of the cases that went to trial resulted in conviction
- individual jurisdiction rates ranged from 52% to 88%.

Source: *Prosecution of felony arrests, 1981.*

Felony case processing time

On average, in a study of 12 mostly urban counties, about half the felonies for which court charges were filed were disposed of within 3 1/2 months.

The average time for disposition was a little less than 5 months for felonies that resulted in indictments or were otherwise bound over for a trial in a State felony court.

Felony cases that went to trial took about twice as long to complete as did those with guilty pleas or dismissals. Even when felonies went to trial, the average time from arrest to disposition was less than 8 months.

Generally, the more serious the charge, the longer it took to process the case.

Processing times are greatly influenced by how the cases are handled after the charges are first filed in court:

- some felony charges are reduced to misdemeanors and the cases disposed of in lower courts
- other felony cases are sent to grand juries or are otherwise ordered to trial in a higher court.

Felony cases typically take longer to process than do cases in lower courts:

- unlike misdemeanor cases, they typically require preliminary hearings or grand jury presentations
- they also more frequently require full trials.

The average processing time in the 12 jurisdictions for all felony cases filed with the courts according to the most serious charge were:

Homicide	6.2 months
Sexual assault	4.2
Robbery	3.5
Burglary	3.2
Larceny	3.2

Many factors influence case disposition times, but delay-reduction policies of prosecutors and courts are among the most significant.

Source: Felony case processing time.

Pretrial release and Federal prosecution

In the Federal courts and in the State and local courts studied, about 85% of the defendants are released pending trial.

Of all Federal defendants released in 1979—

- about 50% were on unsecured bond
- 23% were on personal recognizance
- 14% were on deposit bond
- 9% were on surety bond
- less than 2% were on collateral bond.

In Federal courts, the highest bail amounts tend to be imposed on defendants accused of the most serious crimes who have extensive criminal records and weak social and economic ties.

Of Federal defendants released, about 10% are rearrested for new crimes, violate the conditions of their release, or fail to appear for trial. In State and local courts, pretrial misconduct occurs three times as often. This difference may be attributed to the large number of white-collar offenders prosecuted in the Federal courts.

During the same bail period, Federal defendants with serious criminal records are more likely to be rearrested or fail to appear for trial (35%) than defendants with less serious records (20%), or those with no records (8%).

The longer a defendant waits for a trial, the greater is the probability of misconduct:

The likelihood was—

- 10% for Federal defendants free on bail for 90 days
- 14% for those on bail for 180 days,
- 17% for those on bail for 270 days.

Source: Pretrial release and misconduct: Federal offense and offenders.

Indigent defense

The Constitution grants a person accused of a crime punishable by a term of incarceration a right to an attorney. The courts have ruled that the defense of accused persons must be provided regardless of the defendant's ability to pay for such counsel. Therefore, the costs of indigent defense services are borne by the public.

The Nation spent almost \$625 million in 1982 for indigent criminal defense services in about 3.2 million State and local court cases.

Spending for indigent defense in 1982 was—

- 44% greater than the estimated \$435 million spent during 1980
- 213% greater than the estimated \$200 million spent in 1976.

The average cost of an indigent defense case nationwide was \$196—ranging from \$567 in Hawaii to \$85 in Oklahoma.

Assigned counsel systems that require the appointment of private attorneys dominate service delivery patterns. They are used in 60% of all counties, whereas 34% use public defender systems and 6% use contract systems.

Public defender systems are the dominant system in 43 of the 50 largest counties in the United States and serve 68% of the Nation's population.

A growing number of cases are no longer being handled by public defenders, mainly because of the increasingly strict definition of what constitutes a conflict of interest and limits on the number of cases the public defender is able to handle.

Of all counties studied, 75% have some form of recoupment requiring defendants to repay a portion of their defense costs; but 25% of the counties that require recoupment reported that no payments were received in 1982.

Sources: Criminal defense systems: A national survey, National criminal defense study.

Court caseloads

More than 80 million cases were filed in the State trial courts of 46 States and the District of Columbia in 1983:

- the large majority were traffic cases
- civil cases accounted for 16% of the filings, criminal cases, for 13%, and juvenile cases, 1.25%.

Trial court data were not available from Indiana, Mississippi, Nevada, and Ohio when these national estimates were made. Based on data from earlier years, these four States could add as many as 4 million filings to the 1983 estimate of 80 million.

Most crime is a State and local problem: About 98% of all civil and criminal court cases are filed in State and local courts.

Serious crime is only a small portion of the criminal justice workload:

- criminal cases represent less than 13% of the case filings in State courts
- felony filings are only a small fraction of the criminal filings there.

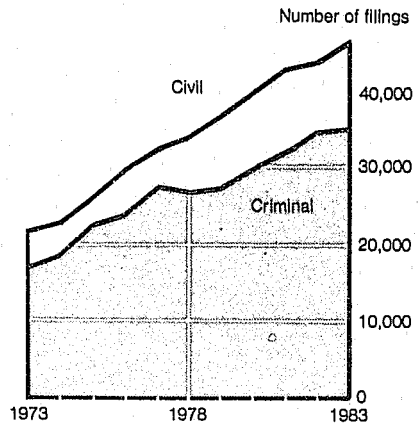
In 24 States that were able to distinguish felony cases in their data, such cases ranged from 5% to 32% of all criminal filings, with a median across the States of 9%.

Source: *Case filings in State courts, 1983.*

Appeals and habeas corpus

State appeals court cases more than doubled during the decade 1973–83.

Civil and criminal appeals filed, 1973-83 (38 States)



The increase—114% for civil cases and 107% for criminal cases—was greater than the 90% increase in Federal appeals filed in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Both civil and criminal caseloads increased by about 4% per year since 1978, not nearly as fast as appellate filings.

Criminal appeals made up only 10% to 15% of the total appeals until the 1960's, when a rapid increase occurred. In the past decade, criminal appeals accounted for 43% to 46% of all appeals.

The number of Federal habeas corpus petitions (in which prisoners challenge the validity of their State convictions after they have exhausted all other appeals) rose nearly 700% between 1961 and 1982.

Only a small number of inmates (1.8%) who filed habeas corpus petitions were successful in gaining any type of release.

Many of the same prisoners filed successive habeas corpus petitions for State and Federal court review of their conviction and/or detention.

Sources: *The growth of appeals: 1973-83 trends. Habeas corpus: Federal review of State prisoner petitions.*

Sentencing practices

States vary in the degree of judicial and parole board discretion in the sentencing and release decisions provided by law. Currently, the range of State sentencing systems involves—

Indeterminate sentencing. The judge has primary control over the type of sentence given (such as prison, probation, or fine, and the upper and lower bounds of the length of prison sentences within statutory limits)—but actual time served is determined by the parole board.

Determinate sentencing. The judge sets the type of sentence and the length of prison sentences within statutory limits—but the parole board may not release prisoners before their sentences (minus good time) have expired.

Mandatory prison terms. Legislation requires the imposition of a prison sentence, often of specified length, for certain crimes and/or certain categories of offenders.

Presumptive sentencing. The judge is required to impose a sentence whose length is set by law for each offense or class of offense. When there are mitigating or aggravating circumstances, however, the judge is allowed to shorten or lengthen the sentence within specified boundaries.

Some States have other practices that affect sentencing and the actual time served:

Sentencing guidelines. The courts set sentences by using procedures designed to structure sentencing decisions, usually based on offense severity and criminal history.

Parole guidelines. Parole boards use procedures designed to structure release decisions based on measurable offender criteria.

Good-time policies. In nearly all the States, legislation allows for reduction of a prison term based on the offender's behavior in prison.

Emergency crowding provisions. Policies that relieve prison crowding by systematically making certain inmates eligible for early release.

In recent years, many States have been moving away from sentencing systems that allow judges and parole boards wide discretion in sentences and time served to more certain and fixed punishments for crimes—through mandatory sentences, sentences of fixed length (determinate sentencing), and the abolition of parole boards.

Evidence of this shift in sentencing and release policy can be seen in the percentage of offenders leaving State prisons as a result of a parole board decision:

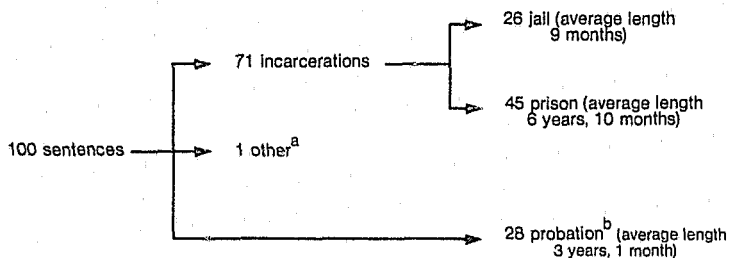
- in 1977, nearly 72% of those discharged from prison exited as a result of a parole board decision
- by contrast, in 1985, 43% of those released were by a parole board's decision
- increasingly, States have come to rely on mandatory release (sentence length minus good-time earned while in prison) to fix release dates rather than parole boards.

Mandatory sentencing has also gained wide acceptance as legislatures in almost all States have defined specific offenses or offender types for which imprisonment sentences must be given (probation is not an option):

- these offenses generally focus on specific violent crimes, offenses involving the use of weapons, or drug crimes
- repeat offenders have also been targeted by many States with mandatory enhancements given for a prior felony conviction or the inclusion of new offense categories for repeat offenders in State criminal codes.

Sources: Setting prison terms. Sentencing practices in 13 States. Felony sentencing in 18 local jurisdictions. Prison admissions and releases, 1983.

**A typical 100 sentences in felony court
in 18 local jurisdictions, 1983**



^aOther includes such sentences as restitution to the victim or a fine.
^bProbation refers to probation only and does not include sentences to a split term of incarceration and probation.

Sentencing outcomes

Most convicted felons are sentenced to incarceration.

Felons convicted of more serious offenses are more likely to go to State prison:

**Percent of convicted felons sent to prison
in 18 local jurisdictions, 1983**

Homicide	85%
Rape	69
Robbery	65
Burglary	46
Aggravated assault	39
Larceny	29
Drug trafficking	23

Some jurisdictions use local jails more often than State prison for convicted felons. For example:

- in Hennepin County (Minneapolis), Minnesota, about half the convicted felons received some sort of jail term in 1983
- in the City of Baltimore, Maryland, less than 0.5 of convicted felons were sentenced to jail.

Straight probation accounted for more than a fourth of felony sentences in the 18 jurisdictions studied. Almost another fifth of such sentences were to a term in jail followed by probation.

Felons with multiple conviction charges receive longer sentences:

- 40% of those convicted on a single charge in the 18 jurisdictions received prison sentences, averaging more than 5 years
- 69% of those convicted on four or more charges received prison terms averaging almost 14 years.

About 1 in 9 persons convicted of multiple charges and sentenced to prison received *consecutive* sentences (requiring that sentences be served in sequence). The others received *concurrent* sentences (allowing the offender to serve two or more sentences at the same time).

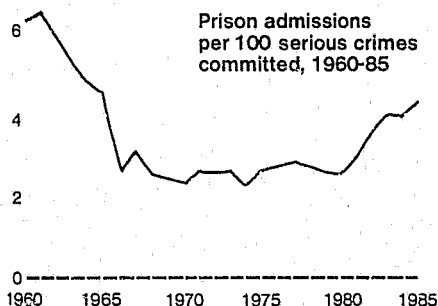
The prison sentence imposed is longer for persons given *consecutive* sentences (an average of almost 19 years in the 18 jurisdictions) than for those given *concurrent* sentences (an average of almost 9 years).

Whites and blacks entering prison in 1983 received the same average sentences if differences in geographical and offense distributions are taken into account:

- a higher proportion of blacks than whites had been convicted of a violent crime, especially robbery
- blacks were concentrated in States that gave longer average sentences to all racial groups than were given in other States.

For each of the major violent crimes (except murder), sentences were longer for the men than for the women who entered State prison in 1983. Murder brought a median sentence of life imprisonment for both sexes.

The risk of imprisonment for serious crime has increased in recent years, but it has not yet reached the levels of 20 to 25 years ago.



Persons prosecuted for the white-collar crimes of forgery/counterfeiting, fraud, and embezzlement in eight States and one territory in 1983 had a conviction rate—

- slightly lower (74%) than those arrested for property crimes (76%)
- but higher than for violent crimes (66%) or public-order crimes (67%); public-order offenses include nonviolent sexual offenses, commercialized vice, drug offenses, disorderly conduct, and weapons offenses.

Persons convicted of white-collar crimes were—

- much less likely to be sentenced to incarceration for more than a year (18%) than violent offenders (39%) and property offenders (26%)
- sentenced to incarceration less often than violent offenders and property offenders (60%, 67%, and 65%, respectively) but more often than public-order offenders (55%).

Offenders against minors are more likely than other offenders to be prosecuted and convicted:

- yet, fewer offenders against minors are incarcerated and, when they are, they receive shorter prison sentences than do others
- a smaller percentage of persons arrested for crimes against children receive prison sentences of more than a year than do persons arrested for crimes against victims of all ages.

Sources: *Felony sentencing in 18 local jurisdictions. Prisoners in 1985. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Tracking offenders: The child victim. Tracking offenders: White-collar crime.*

Corrections

Few aspects of criminal justice have been the subject of more intense debate over the past several years than that of corrections policy. As the public has demanded stiffer sentences and the effects of demographic changes in the population have increased the size of the more "prison prone" age groups in society, prisons have filled to over capacity, leading to increased demands on correctional systems.

The BJS corrections statistics program provides systematic data on correctional populations and agency workloads covering probation, local jails, State and Federal prisons, parole, and persons under sentence of death.

In fiscal 1986 the first release of data from the National Jail Inmate Survey was published in *Jail inmates, 1983* (BJS Bulletin, November 1985). Additional analyses and publications are scheduled for fiscal 1987. Also released was *Jail inmates, 1984* (BJS Bulletin, May 1986) presenting data from the annual jail inmate survey that is used to obtain counts of and information about inmates in years when the census is not conducted.

During the year, the Survey of State Prison Inmates was conducted. A nationally representative sample of 15,000 inmates was interviewed about such matters as criminal history, demographic characteristics, and drug and alcohol use. Data analysis and publication will take place in fiscal 1987.

The National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) series dates back to 1926. It provides yearend and midyear counts, by jurisdiction, of prisoners confined in State and Federal institutions. *Prisoners in 1985* (BJS Bulletin, June 1986) and a September 1986 press release documented the continued growth in the population of the Nation's prisons: during the year, the number of persons in State and Federal prisons passed the half-million mark, reaching a record high of 528,945 by June 30, 1986. Also released during the year was the detailed report, *Prisoners in State and Federal institutions on December 31, 1983* (BJS Final Report, June 1986).

The National Probation Reports series provides annual data, by State, on the number of admissions to probation supervision and the yearend total of persons under such supervision. The Uniform Parole Reports Program, begun in 1965, provides data on the populations and characteristics of persons admitted to and released from parole supervision. This program also gathers information from States annually on legislative and administrative changes likely to affect the length of sentences and the time served in correctional institutions. During the year *Probation and parole, 1984* (BJS Bulletin, February 1986) and *Parole in the U.S., 1980 and 1981* (BJS Final Report, March 1986) were released.

In fiscal 1986, the third report of data was made from a new program to gather information on the characteristics of offenders admitted to or released from prisons—the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP). This report, *Prison admissions and releases, 1983* (BJS Special

Report, March 1986), provided more details than had been available on demographic characteristics, offenses, sentences, and time served of persons admitted to and released from State prisons.

The NCRP has been integrated with Uniform Parole Reports to provide a complete overview of sanctioning across the States—from prison entry through termination of parole for each offender.

The corrections statistics program also reports separately on State prisoners sentenced to and awaiting execution. Final reports were issued during the year for 1983 and 1984: *Capital punishment, 1983* (BJS Final Report, April 1986) and *Capital punishment, 1984* (BJS Final Report, May 1986).

During fiscal 1986, analysis was completed for the fiscal 1987 release of *Children in custody: Public juvenile facilities, 1985*. *Children in custody: 1982/83 census of juvenile detention and correctional facilities* (BJS Final Report, September 1986) was published during fiscal 1986. These were the first reports produced by BJS as a part of an interagency agreement with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

In all, 10 statistical reports were produced under the corrections program in fiscal 1986.

Adult correctional populations

At yearend 1985, 3% of the adult males in the United States were incarcerated or under some form of correctional supervision.

Of the 2.9 million adults under the care or custody of a correctional agency at the end of 1985, 3 out of 4 were being supervised in the community:

Total	2,904,979	100.0%
Probation	1,870,132	64.4
Parole	277,438	9.6
Prison	503,315	17.3
Jail	254,094	8.7

Of these 2.9 million adults, almost 87% were male, 64% were white, 34% black, and 1% were of other races.

More than 1 million adults were placed on probation during 1985, and about 180,000 adults began a parole term.

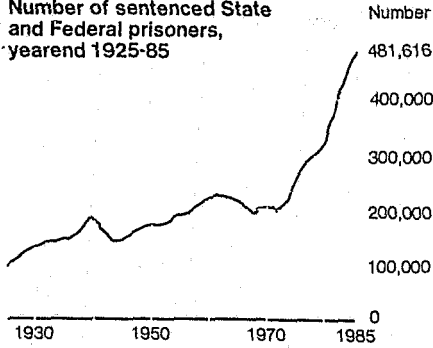
The number of persons under each type of correctional supervision is at an all-time high:

- the Nation's adult probation population increased by 18% between 1983 and 1985
- the parole population increased by 13% between 1983 and 1985
- the prison and jail populations grew by 15% between 1983 and 1985.

By yearend 1985, the number of persons in State and Federal prisons passed the half-million mark and by midyear 1986, another new prison population record was set, reaching 528,945 prisoners. This continued a 12-year trend of increasing prison populations.

BJS reports on . . .

Number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners, yearend 1925-85

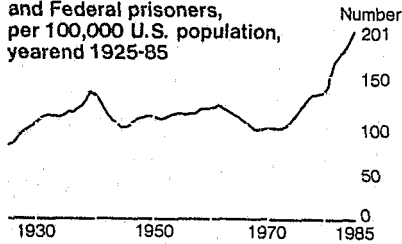


There were 554 deaths among jail inmates during the year ending June 30, 1983, compared to 611 such deaths in the year prior to the 1978 jail census; suicide was the principal cause.

About 55% of the adult male deaths, 79% of the adult female deaths, and all seven of the juvenile deaths in the 1982-83 period were suicides. All of the juvenile suicides were boys.

Sources: *Prisoners in 1985. Probation and parole 1985. The 1983 jail census. The prevalence of imprisonment. Jail inmates, 1984. State and Federal prisoners, 1925-85.* BJS press release, September 14, 1986.

Number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners, per 100,000 U.S. population, yearend 1925-85



Note: Prior to 1977, prisoner reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1977, focus is on the jurisdiction population.

Based on current incarceration rates, 3% to 5% of the males born in the United States today are likely to serve a sentence in an adult State prison during some time in their lives.

Because of their dual functions of detention and confinement, jails have a higher volume of admissions and releases than other correctional facilities. During the year ending June 30, 1984, more than 8 million persons were admitted to jails while slightly less than 8 million were released.

Juveniles in custody

On February 1, 1985, 49,322 juveniles were being held in 1,040 public detention, correctional, and shelter facilities; this was a 1% increase in the number held on the same date in 1983. Another 34,000 juveniles were housed in some 2,000 private facilities in 1985.

Of those in public facilities—

- about 93% were accused of, or had been found to have committed, acts that would be criminal offenses if committed by adults
- about 19% were being held for murder, rape, robbery, or aggravated assault
- 5% of the juveniles in custody were status offenders, such as truants, runaways, or curfew violators.

About 18% of the public facilities (which held about 45% of the juveniles in public custody) held more residents than they were designed for.

At the time of the juvenile facility census, 86% of the juveniles were male, 61% were white, 37% black, and 2% other races. About 82% of the juveniles were between 14 and 17 years old.

Nationally, 185 juveniles per 100,000 juvenile population were in custody. This is 5% higher than in 1983. The West had the highest confinement rate, 327 juveniles per 100,000 juvenile population, followed by the Midwest with 166, the South with 162, and the Northeast with 99.

The average cost of housing a resident for 1 year in a public juvenile facility was—

- \$25,200 nationally
- \$39,900 in the Northeast
- \$26,100 in the Midwest
- \$22,900 in the West
- \$22,700 in the South.

In 1984, 521,607 juveniles were admitted to the public facilities and 515,301 were discharged.

Source: Children in custody: Public juvenile facilities, 1985.

Prison and jail crowding

An estimated 165,000 new State prison beds were added between 1978 and 1985. Yet, crowding remains a serious problem:

- despite use of a wide variety of crowding measures, it is estimated that the Nation's prisons are operating at between 6% and 21% above capacity
- most State prison systems, as well as the Federal system, are filled beyond capacity
- 19 States reported 18,617 early releases in 1985 because of crowding
- 19 States said that 10,143 prisoners were backed up in local jails because their prisons do not have room.

At yearend 1984, six States and the District of Columbia were operating their entire prison systems under a court order or consent decree concerning overcrowding and other conditions, as was Michigan's system for male offenders. In 25 other States, at least one major prison was under a court order or a consent decree.

During 1984, the prison population in States entirely under court order increased 2.9%, compared to an increase of 9.2% in States without court intervention.

Total inmate living space in State prisons throughout the country grew by 29% between 1979 and 1984. During the same period, the number of prisoners grew 45%, resulting in an 11% decline in the average amount of living space per inmate.

There is little evidence that prison population density levels were directly associated with elevated death rates, inmate-on-inmate assaults, or other disturbances. Such events occurred more frequently in maximum security facilities, irrespective of their population densities.

In 1984, about a quarter of all local jails in the Nation's largest systems, that is, those city and county jails that hold more than 100 people, held extra inmates due to crowding in other jails or in State or Federal prisons. These jails were operating at 102% of their rated capacities at midyear 1984; overall it is estimated that the Nation's jails were operating at 90% of rated capacity

Of the Nation's largest jails, 22% were under court order to reduce their populations. In addition—

- 13% were under orders to improve recreational facilities
- 11% have been ordered to improve their medical facilities or services.

Sources: Prisoners in 1985. Population density in State prisons. Jail inmates, 1984.

Characteristics of prison and jail inmates

In 1985, the rate of incarceration for sentenced males was about 23 times higher than for sentenced females—394 per 100,000 males in the resident population vs. 17 per 100,000 females.

About 5% of the Nation's Federal and State prisoners were women.

More than 40% of the women entering prison in 1983 had been convicted of larceny, forgery, or fraud, compared to 15% of the men. Violent crimes were much more common among male offenders than among women.

Prisoners entering 30 State prison systems in 1983 were convicted of the following offenses:

Burglary	26.3%
Robbery	14.3
Larceny	11.3
Drug crimes	8.3
Public-order crimes	7.6
Assault	7.0
Forgery or fraud	5.7
Murder	3.8
Sexual assault other than rape	2.6
Rape	2.4
Motor vehicle theft	2.2
Manslaughter	1.9
Stolen property	1.4
Other crimes	1.3
Other violent crimes	1.2
Kidnaping	1.0
Other property crimes	1.0
Arson	0.7

Of persons entering prison in 1983—

- just over a third had been convicted of a violent crime (with robbery the most common violent offense)
- almost half did so for a property offense
- about a sixth had committed drug offenses or public-order offenses (such as weapons violations, drunk driving, commercialized vice, or morals offenses).

Drug offenses were more common among women (11.6%) than men (8.1%) and among whites (9.5%) than blacks (6.7%). Among Hispanic prisoners, both white and black, 14% were admitted for drug offenses.

About 18% of the new prisoners had been returned to prison for violating parole conditions from a previous offense.

Of persons admitted to State prison in 1983—

- approximately 54% were white
- 45% were black
- less than 1% were of other races, primarily native Americans and Asian Americans.

Of State prison inmates in 1979—

- 67% were convicted violent offenders (either the current offense or a previous conviction)
- 95% were convicted violent offenders or previously had been convicted of a crime.

Among local jail inmates in 1984—

- about half were awaiting or on trial
- the other half were convicted offenders who will either serve their sentence in jail (usually for less than 1 year) or will be transferred to a State prison.

BJS reports on . . .

The median age of jail inmates in 1983 was 27 years. Other demographic characteristics of jail inmates:

- 79% were unmarried
- 59% had not completed high school
- 93% were male, 7% female
- 58% were white, 39% black, 3% other races.

The median income among the inmates who had been free for the year before their arrest was \$5,486. Of those in jail—

- 41% had a full-time job at the time they were arrested
- 12% had been working part time
- 47% were not employed.

Unconvicted offenders held in local jails were charged with these offenses:

Burglary	16%
Robbery	14
Public-order offenses	13
Murder/attempted murder	10
Assault	9
Larceny	9
Drug offenses	8
Fraud/forgery/embezzlement	6
Rape/sexual assault	4
Other property	5
Other violent	3

Of all inmates under sentence in a local jail, 10% were confined for drunk driving.

The most common offense of jail inmates age 45 or older was driving under the influence (20% of the inmates in that age group).

Almost 9 out of 10 unconvicted jail inmates had had bail set for them. Those who had not had bail set were mainly probationers or parolees whose release had been revoked or persons charged with offenses (such as first-degree murder) for which bail may not be set in certain jurisdictions.

The number of juveniles held in jails on June 30, 1984, was 15% less than in the previous year.

Sources: *Prisoners in 1985. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Jail inmates, 1983. Jail inmates, 1984.*

Corrections funding

In 1983, less than one penny of every dollar spent by Federal, State, and local governments went into the operation of the Nation's correctional system (including jails, prisons, probation, and parole).

State and local governments bear the greatest burden of correctional expenses. They devoted an average of 1.7% of their spending to corrections in 1983.

In 1983, State governments spent about \$5.1 billion for the operation, maintenance, and construction of State correctional institutions. This was more than 80% of the States' total corrections expenditure of \$6.3 billion in that year.

Sources: *Justice expenditure and employment, 1983. Justice expenditure and employment extracts: 1982 and 1983.*

Time served in prison

Actual time served (including jail and prison time) is generally much less than the maximum sentence length:

	1983 admissions		1983 releases	
	Percent of admissions	Median sentence length (months)	Percent of releases	Median time served (months)
All offenses	100%	36	100%	19
Murder	3.7	Life	2.3	79
Manslaughter	2.6	72	2.8	32
Rape	2.6	84	1.9	47
Robbery	16.4	60	14.3	30
Assault	6.8	48	8.2	24
Burglary	25.8	36	24.1	17
Larceny	10.4	24	11.7	12
Auto theft	1.8	24	1.9	15
Forgery/fraud/ embezzlement	5.2	36	5.8	15
Drugs	8.2	36	8.6	15
Other	16.5		18.4	

More than half the convicted murderers who left State prisons during 1983 served less than 7 years, including jail time, for their crimes. Half the—

- rapists served less than 4 years
- robbers served 2.5 years or less
- arsonists served less than 2 years
- burglars served less than 1.5 years.

A life sentence rarely means that an offender will spend the rest of his or her life in prison. Of those released from a life sentence in 1983—

- the median time served was 8 years and 7 months, including credited jail time
- about 20% served 3 years or less.

Nearly 25% of those released with life sentences had previously served time in prison for a felony conviction.

Source: *Prison admissions and releases, 1983.*

Capital punishment

At yearend 1985, 1,591 persons were under a sentence of death in State prisons.

Of these—

- all had been convicted of murder
- 99% were males
- 57% were white
- the median age was nearly 32.
- two-thirds had prior felony convictions
- 1 in 10 had a prior homicide conviction
- a fifth were on parole at the time of their capital offense
- nearly another fifth had pending charges, were on probation, or were prison inmates or escapees when they committed their capital offense
- excluding those with pending charges, almost a third of those awaiting execution were under sentence for another crime when the capital offense was committed.

At yearend 1985, laws in 37 States authorized the death penalty, but only—

- 32 States held prisoners under sentence of death
- 8 States had conducted executions during that year.

Lethal injection (16 States) and electrocution (15 States) were the most common methods of execution permitted by State law. Lethal gas was permitted in 8 States, hanging in 4 States, and a firing squad in 2 States.

The 18 persons executed in 1985 brought the total to 50 persons executed in 12 States since 1976 when the Supreme Court affirmed the death penalty.

Criminal history profile of prisoners under sentence of death, yearend 1985

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Number under sentence of death	1,591	100.0%
Prior felony conviction		
With	970	66.2
Without	496	33.8
Not reported	125	
Prior homicide conviction		
With	116	9.0
Without	1,170	91.0
Not reported	305	
Legal status at time of capital offense		
Charges pending	85	6.6
Probation	70	5.4
Parole	260	20.1
Prison escapee	36	2.8
Prison inmate	44	3.4
Other status	21	1.6
None	776	60.1
Not reported	299	

From the beginning of 1977 to the end of 1985, a total of 2,110 persons were admitted to prisons under sentence of death and 889 persons were removed from the condemned population as a result of dispositions other than execution (i.e., resentencing, retrial, commutation, or death occurring while awaiting execution).

The oldest person on death row was 74 years old, the youngest was 16. There were 14 States that do not specify in their laws the minimum age at which a capital sentence may be imposed. The age most frequently set by statute is 18 years old (nine States).

Source: *Capital punishment, 1985.*

Recidivism and career criminals

Few issues in criminal justice have drawn as much attention as the impact of recidivism on public safety and the implications of this issue for sentencing policy. Career criminal programs and mandatory or enhanced sentences for repeat offenders are examples of policies that aim to reduce the threat recidivists pose to society.

In fiscal 1986, two BJS reports presented important new findings relevant to the contemporary debate on recidivism:

- *Jail inmates, 1983* (BJS Bulletin, November 1985), was based on a sample survey of jail inmates that collected detailed data on their demographic characteristics, current offense, and prior criminal records.
- *Prison admissions and releases, 1983* (BJS Special Report, March 1986), contains data for 30 States participating in the National Corrections Reporting Program for that year. These States reported on 144,804 persons entering prison in 1983 and 135,179 released from prison in that year. These prisoners represented more than three-fifths of the Nation's total State prison admissions and releases in 1983. Topics covered include previous criminal history.

Also during the year, significant progress was made in developing a national recidivism statistical series using FBI criminal-history information to determine criminal activity of persons released from State prisons. The first report from this effort will be released in fiscal 1987.

At least 80% of the men and women held in local jails in 1983 had a prior criminal conviction. About two-thirds had served time before in a jail or prison, and about a third had served a prior sentence at least twice.

More than 40% of the 1983 jail population were people who at the time of their arrest had been on probation, parole, bail or other pretrial release, or had been fugitives from justice.

Almost a fifth of those admitted to State prison in 1983 were parole violators. About a third of those leaving prison in 1983 had previously served time in prison for a felony. Males were more likely than females to have a prior incarceration history for a felony. There was little difference between whites and blacks.

Prisoners released in 1983 who had served time for a past felony had received sentences on average 7 months longer (or 12% more) than those with no prison history. This varied by offense type:

- 17 months longer for current violent offenses
- 6 months longer for current property offenses
- 11 months longer for current drug offenses.

Of persons entering a State prison in 1979—

- almost 84% had a record of prior convictions, including 61% who had previously been incarcerated as an adult, a juvenile, or both
- about 28% had five or more prior convictions for criminal offenses
- at the time of their admission, 40% were on parole or probation for prior offenses
- about 28% would still have been incarcerated for earlier crimes if they had served the maximum term imposed by the court on their prior sentence to confinement.

About half of those released from State prisons will return within 20 years, and 60% of these repeaters will be back by the end of the third year.

Recidivists entering prison for robbery, burglary, or auto theft return to prison more rapidly than those who entered for other crimes.

With some exceptions, the highest risk of returning to prison occurs during the second half of the first release year.

The greater the amount of time a former prisoner remains in the community without reincarceration beyond the first year, the less is the likelihood that he or she will return to prison.

Sources: Jail Inmates, 1983. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Examining recidivism. Returning to prison. Career patterns in crime.

Privacy, security, and confidentiality of criminal justice data

The increased reliance on criminal justice data for public and private sector uses has highlighted the need for accurate, complete, and timely criminal justice records. Policies that govern the collection and maintenance of such data and legislation that regulates the release of such data for different purposes are also of prime concern to the criminal justice community. In response to these concerns, a major part of BJS activity during the year in the area of privacy, security, and confidentiality focused on the issue of data quality.

A major national conference on the quality of criminal justice records was convened during fiscal 1986. The meeting, which included presentations by then Deputy Attorney General D. Lowell Jensen, then Assistant Attorney General Lois H. Herrington, BJS Director Steven R. Schlesinger, and several members of Congress, explored many aspects of data quality policy, legislation, and implementation techniques. Proceedings of the conference were prepared for issuance in fiscal 1987 as part of the BJS Information Policy document series.

A major report in the Criminal Justice Information Policy series, *Data quality of criminal justice records*, was issued in fiscal 1986. The report describes statutory and common law requirements for data accuracy and discusses sanctions for failure to maintain data standards. Key issues relating to Federal and State data quality policies are also highlighted.

In recognition of the key role that courts play in the development of complete criminal-history records, a special effort was made to ensure higher levels of court disposition reporting. Specifically, during fiscal 1986, a report describing the legal, technical, and policy issues relating to disposition reporting was prepared.

Operational plans were also developed for a meeting between the court administrators and Federal and State personnel to discuss this issue. It is anticipated that the meeting, the first of its kind at the Federal level, will be convened in fiscal 1987.

In addition, BJS funded efforts to review the basic policies and assumptions underlying DOJ Regulations (28 CFR Part 20) which implement the "privacy and security requirements" as set out in Section 812 of the Omnibus Crime Control Act, as amended. This activity will continue through fiscal 1987 and may result in revision of the regulations.

Another document in the Information Policy series, *Criminal justice "hot" files*, was prepared. It is an extensive review of the policies and procedures affecting maintenance and dissemination of files on wanted persons and stolen property. The report also contains specific descriptions of Federal procedures for accessing FBI "hot" files.

In recognition of the impact that automated fingerprint identification systems will have on the accuracy of record checks, a study was conducted to determine the current status of such systems and to analyze the policy implications associated with increased use of automated fingerprint checks. A report on the topic was prepared for release in fiscal 1987.

The results of a 1984 survey of State criminal justice record repositories were presented in *State criminal records repositories* (BJS Technical Report, October 1985). This survey provided the first composite picture of the number of subject records in State repositories, the number of arrests and final dispositions reported each year, the extent of automation of repository data, the legal requirements imposed on law enforcement agencies for disposition reporting, and the production of statistical reports by the repositories.

Also published during the year was *Crime control and criminal records* (BJS Special Report, October 1985). This report addressed the relationship between crime control policies, such as pretrial release and selective incapacitation, and the nature and amount of criminal-history record information that is collected, retained, and disseminated.

BJS continued to oversee activities to ensure the confidentiality of statistical and research data. These activities included the development and review of appropriate data maintenance and transfer procedures in support of the BJS Federal, State, and national programs.

BJS reports on . . .

By 1984, all 50 States had enacted laws to ensure some aspect of data quality.

Most State legislation (36 States) was enacted after promulgation of DOJ Privacy and Security Regulations (28 CFR Part 20) in 1975.

The statutes of almost all States (44) require that State and local law enforcement agencies report arrests for serious crimes to the central repository.

A lesser number of States require that case disposition data be reported to the central repository.

Disposition data are required to be reported—

- by courts (24 States)
- correctional agencies (31 States)
- prosecutors (23 States).

Many disposition reporting requirements are generally worded, and, therefore, are difficult to enforce.

Criminal-history records are the most frequently used records in criminal justice.

Despite increasing awareness of data quality, States vary substantially in the quality of data. All States have some legislative requirements regarding data, but standards and sanctions are frequently unrealistic and, therefore, unworkable.

In 1984, 44 responding States reported having about 35 million subject records. (A subject record is a record pertaining to a specific person who has entered the criminal justice system. An individual can have more than one subject record.)

Close to 4 million arrests were reported to 39 State repositories in 1983. Almost 2 million final dispositions were reported to the 30 States reporting such data.

Thirty-five States had at least some automated criminal-history information and steady gains are being made in increased automation of criminal records.

Sources: Compendium of State privacy and security legislation, 1984 edition: Overview. Crime control and criminal records. State criminal records repositories.

Source notes

Single copies of any report with an NCJ number can be obtained free from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, toll-free 800-732-3277 (local number 301-251-5500).

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