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# WISCONSIN ADULT JAIL TRENDS

## 1979 - 1989

Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance  
Statistical Analysis Center

### I. Introduction

This report presents Wisconsin County Jail statistics on adults confined in local correctional facilities during selected years over the last thirty years. The data were compiled and analyzed by the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) of the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance.

The report examines trends in adult jail admissions, average daily population (ADP), length of stay, rates of detention, and jail capacities. Data are also provided on other details and circumstances of confinement, such as the sex and race of prisoners and the number of pretrial versus sentenced prisoners, however, these data are more often estimates, based on samples.

The data presented here have been compiled from a number of sources of aggregated statistics, includ-

ing a statewide jail information system which existed in the late 1970's, jail surveys by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice), and a brief survey conducted by the SAC during the spring and summer of 1990. The degree of detail provided in this report is, of course, limited to that provided in these source materials. It must also be noted that the data provided from these sources were not completely comparable. In the most recent survey, for example, the amount of detailed data on confinements varied from county to county, making it necessary to estimate values for some counties and for the state as a whole. No attempt was made to collect certain types of detailed data, such as the type of offense for which persons were being detained.

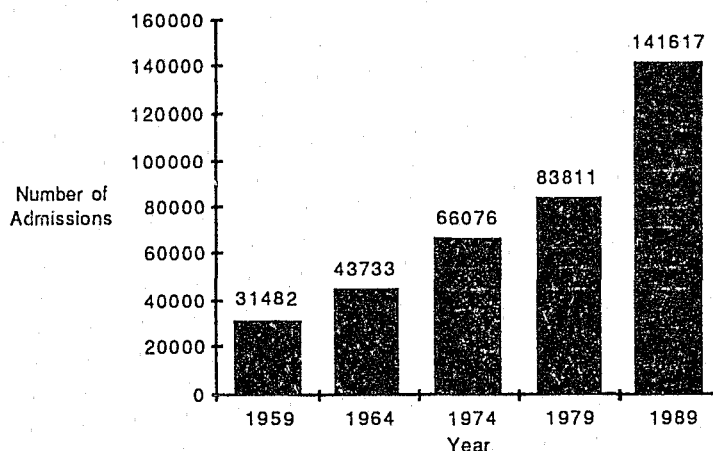
### Acknowledgement

The Office of Justice Assistance would like to thank the County Sheriffs and staff of each County Jail in the State for participating in the survey of 1988 and 1989 jail statistics. Without their assistance in providing these data, this report would not have been possible.

### II. Jail Admission Trends

Graph 1 presents the total number of adult male and female admissions for select years between 1959 and 1989. For the past thirty years, adult jail admissions have increased by nearly 350 percent from 31,482 in 1959 to 141,617 in 1989. There has been an increase of 69 percent since 1979. The increase in total number of admissions has averaged 32 percent every five years from 1959 to 1989.

Graph 1: Jail Admission Trends, 1959-1989



**Jerome D. Lacke**  
Executive Director

**Tommy G. Thompson**  
Governor

### A. Detention Rates

Graph 2 shows the detention rates expressed in terms of the number of adult jail admissions for every 1,000 adults in Wisconsin. The detention rate increased by nearly 61 percent between 1979 and 1989. For comparison purposes, there was one jail admission for every 25 adults in 1989, compared to one for every 40 adults in 1979. Table 1 presents the detention rates presented in graph 2.

Table 1: Detention Rates, 1974-1989

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rate</u>
1974	22.6
1979	24.8
1988	35.0
1989	39.9

### B. Admissions By Sex

Graph 3 shows the proportion of adult admissions which were female. The proportion of female admissions has nearly doubled in the past thirty years, from 6.4 percent in 1959 to 12.3 percent in 1989. The number of female admissions has increased nearly nine times from 2,014 in 1959 to 17,407 in 1989. Since 1979, female admissions has increased by 147 percent from 7,040 in 1979 to 17,407 in 1989.

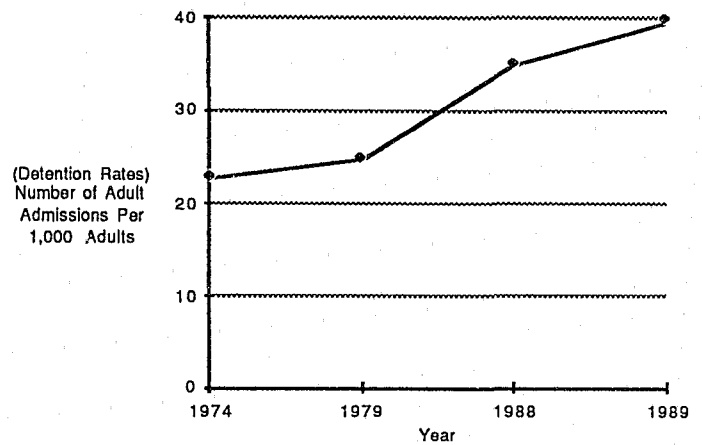
### C. Admissions By Race

Graph 4 shows the proportion of race for 1988 and 1989. The distribution of jail inmates by race was exactly the same in 1988 and 1989, with the White adult population accounting for over three-fifths of the jail admissions. There was no change in the distribution of inmates by race between 1988 and 1989.

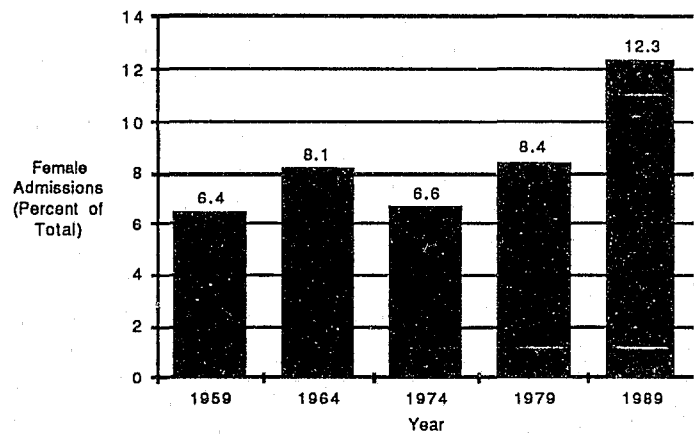
### D. Sentenced Inmates

During 1979 approximately 18.4 percent of admissions were serving a sentence. During 1989 this percentage had risen to 29.7 percent. However, the 1989 figure is an estimate based upon a sample about half of the jurisdictions which filled out this portion on the SAC questionnaire.

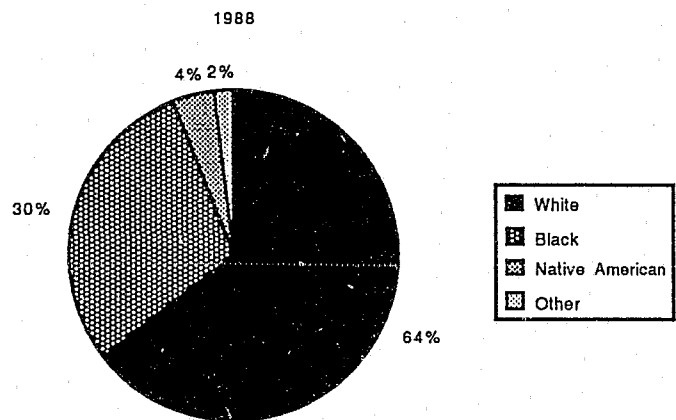
Graph 2: Detention Rates/ Number of Adult Admissions 1974-1989



Graph 3: Female Admissions (Percent of Total) 1959-1989



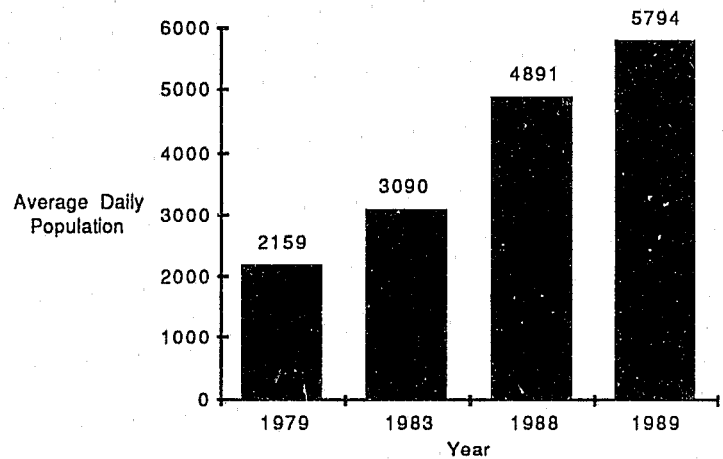
Graph 4: Admissions by Race, 1988-1989



### III. Average Daily Population

The average daily population (ADP), which is defined as the average number of inmates held each day during one year, is shown in Graph 5. The ADP has steadily risen in the past ten years increasing by 168.4 percent since 1979. The average daily population in adult jails showed an increase of about 18 percent from 1988 to 1989, which is close to the average 14 percent annual increase in the ADP between 1979 and 1989. The large increase in the average daily population in the past decade is due to both an increase in the number of adult admissions to jail facilities and an increase in the average length of stay. While total admissions increased by 69 percent between 1979 and 1989, inmates also spent, on the average, an additional four days in jail in 1989.

Graph 5: Average Daily Population, 1979-1989

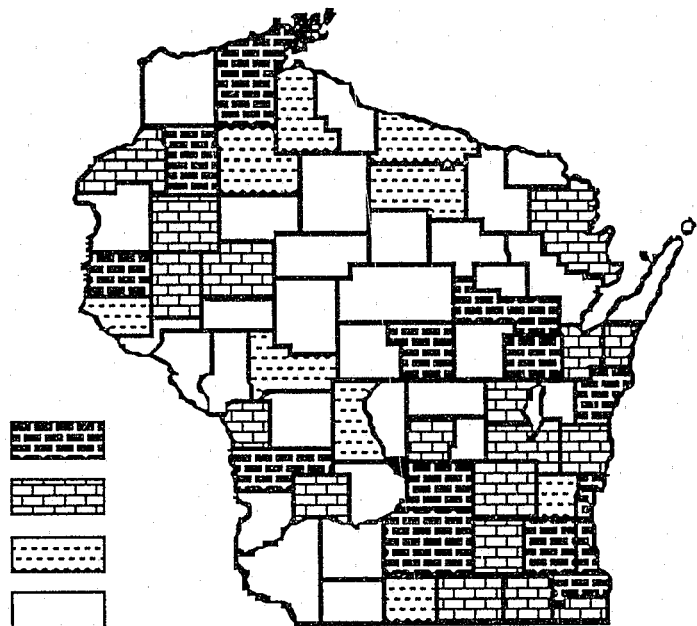


#### A. Distribution Of Inmate Populations

The map of Wisconsin at right shows selected 1989 ADP capacity categories. Generally, an ADP over 80 percent of capacity is considered overcrowded. Overcrowding is widespread, although the urbanized southeast and south-central areas, and the Fox River Valley seem to stand out. It should be pointed out that the capacity figures are not necessarily a direct reflection of the "crime" problem, but are influenced by many factors, including, obviously, the size of the jail. Also, some counties have higher capacities than they might otherwise have because they hold inmates for other counties.

ADP as a Percent of Jail Capacity, 1989

- Over 100%
- 80-100%
- 70-80%
- Under 70%



#### B. Average Length Of Stay

Table 2 shows the average number of days inmates spent in jail for the years 1979, 1988, and 1989. The average length of time spent in jail increased by just over four days from 1979 to 1989. The length of stay has remained relatively steady the past two years.

Table 2: Average Length of Stay 1979-1989

Year	Average Length of Stay
1979	9.4 days
1988	13.7 days
1989	13.5 days

### C. Jail Capacity And ADP

Table 3 compares figures on the State's total adult jail capacity for 1979 and 1989. The total adult capacity was 3,665 in 1979, but had risen to 5,923 by 1989, an increase in capacity of 61.6 percent. However, the ADP increased by 168.4 percent during the same time period. The result of these two trends has been a significant increase in *ADP as a proportion of capacity*. While the statewide ADP was about 59 percent of capacity in 1979, ADP had risen to nearly 98 percent of capacity in 1989.

It is important to remember that the ADP represents the *Average Daily Population* and there will be many days when the jail population will exceed that number. Also, national and state standards recommend that the ADP of a jail should be no more than eighty percent of the jail capacity to retain management flexibility and to reduce the constant need for the

disruptive transfer of inmates within the jail. Efficient operation of a local correctional facility demands sufficient bed spaces to allow for seasonal or weekend confinement peaks, the set-aside of additional space for inmates with special needs (e.g. waived juveniles, suicidal or mentally ill inmates), and allocation of jail capacity according to other obvious categories (female/male, adult/juvenile pretrial/sentenced).

Using this 80 percent criterion for defining jail "overcrowding" we can compare the situation in Wisconsin County jails in 1979 and 1989. In 1979 there were five county jails in which the ADP was more than 80 percent of capacity. However, in 1989 there were 32 county jails in which the ADP exceeded 80 percent of capacity.

Table 3: Jail Capacity 1979 & 1989

<u>Year</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>ADP</u>	<u>ADP as Percent of Capacity</u>
1979	3,665	2,159	58.9%
1989	5,923	5,794	97.8%

### D. Average Daily Population Changes

Table 4 presents the number of County Jails in Wisconsin with Average Daily Populations of twenty or more for 1979, 1983, and 1989. In 1979 there were two County Jails (Dane and Milwaukee) which had an ADP of 100 or more. By 1989 there were 11

such County Jails in Wisconsin. In 1979 there were 24 County Jails which had an ADP of twenty or more. By 1989 there were 49 such County Jails in Wisconsin.

Table 4: Number of County Jails with Various ADP Levels, 1979-1989

<u>ADP level</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1989</u>
100 and Over	2	5	11
50 to 99	6	8	10
30 to 49	6	9	10
20 to 29	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>
Total with 20 or more	24	35	49

### E. Jail Data By County

Table 5 shows the number of adult admissions, Average Daily Populations, and the jail capacity for selected years between 1979 and 1989. The table shows that there were sharp increases in the county jail admission rates and Average Daily Populations throughout the State during the decade. Counties

which were exceptions to the overall ten year trend were generally relatively small. Milwaukee County's ADP increased by 177.1 percent from 1979 to 1989, compared to a 164.3 percent increase for the balance of the State.

Table 5: Adult County Jail Table

County	Admissions		Average Daily Population				Capacity#	
	1988	1989	1979	1983	1988	1989		(% Change) 1979-1989
Adams	290	336	8	16	12	12	+50.0	28
Ashland	434	534	2	14	18	21	+950.0	28
Barron	405	564	10	21	29	30	+200.0	33
Bayfield	230	289	-	-	12	16	*	12
Brown	4,749	5,226	74	75	146	198	+167.6	226
Buffalo	166	265	4	3	4	6	+50.0	24
Burnett	374	403	5	4	16	20	+300.0	24
Calumet	696	790	8	8	22	22	+175.0	32
Chippewa	1,005	1,375	14	19	23	34	+143.0	41
Clark	415	484	14	15	16	14	0	30
Columbia	949	1,029	21	28	43	53	+152.4	48
Crawford	205	258	9	9	7	9	0	28
Dane	10,228	12,003	132	239	408	452	+242.4	438
Dodge	1,400	1,450	25	27	47	49	+96.0	51
Door	418	517	9	10	19	20	+122.2	38
Douglas	2,050	2,003	32	50	50	52	+62.5	72
Dunn	559	711	11	17	20	25	+127.3	28
Eau Claire	3,650	4,274	49	68	76	99	+102.0	180
Florence	27	31	2	-	0	0	-100.0	2
Fond du Lac	2,786	3,259	27	44	79	80	+196.3	86
Forest	276	291	8	7	10	10	+25.0	15
Grant	631	868	15	29	17	24	+60.0	44
Green	606	686	12	14	28	34	+183.3	43
Green Lake	669	761	1	2	22	25	+2400.0	37
Iowa	140	163	5	-	7	9	+80.0	25
Iron	82	119	3	2	2	5	+66.7	12
Jackson	713	750	15	15	23	30	+100.0	38
Jefferson	1,598	1,871	22	23	44	46	+109.0	52
Juneau	446	664	7	17	13	18	+157.0	24
Kenosha	6,358	6,528	68	130	238	219	+222.0	246
Kewaunee	390	561	5	5	12	12	+240.0	22
La Crosse	2,645	2,872	37	61	96	106	+186.5	124
Lafayette	179	269	2	9	8	12	+500.0	18
Langlade	420	550	9	8	17	22	+144.4	33
Lincoln	491	674	12	26	11	15	+25.0	40
Manitowoc	1,370	1,768	26	44	54	63	+142.3	46
Marathon	2,079	2,566	43	40	64	80	+86.0	118
Marinette	550	700	12	20	33	36	+200.0	40
Marquette	369	517	6	6	12	12	+100.0	15
Milwaukee	26,000	28,575	690	969	1,755	1,912	+177.1	1,359

Table 5 Continued:

County	Admissions		Average Daily Population				Capacity#	
	1988	1989	1979	1983	1988	1989		(% Change) 1979-1989
<i>Monroe</i>	920	981	16	24	30	35	+118.7	58
Oconto	648	658	12	5	18	18	+50.0	31
Oneida	714	851	16	30	30	35	+118.7	46
Outagamie	2,767	3,132	29	69	124	129	+344.8	112
Ozaukee	1,855	2,071	18	43	35	48	+166.7	46
Pepin	99	123	1	1	2	5	+400.0	11
Pierce	917	976	15	12	24	25	+66.7	34
Polk	619	675	9	20	18	19	+111.0	36
Portage	558	706	17	21	29	37	+117.6	32
Price	223	304	5	12	11	13	+160.0	24
<i>Racine</i>	5,221	5,565	93	125	235	250	+168.8	200
Richland	415	491	4	18	18	25	+525.0	29
Rock	4,411	4,990	89	111	225	308	+246.0	334
<i>Rusk</i>	500	560	5	13	22	24	+380.0	41
<i>St. Croix</i>	1,388	1,922	18	15	24	26	+44.4	25
Sauk	1,274	1,626	22	24	37	29	+31.8	67
Sawyer	580	573	8	11	15	17	+112.5	22
<i>Shawano</i>	1,088	1,569	22	30	38	55	+150.0	46
<i>Sheboygan</i>	2,023	2,362	41	64	71	83	+102.4	100
Taylor	300	428	2	8	10	13	+550.0	28
Trempealeau	643	795	5	11	14	16	+220.0	27
<i>Vernon</i>	492	597	5	6	17	21	+320.0	20
Vilas	688	742	10	13	18	20	+100.0	27
Walworth	2,638	3,191	48	49	87	112	+133.3	120
Washburn	236	270	4	5	4	10	+150.0	7
Washington	2,079	2,132	25	33	67	72	+188.0	100
Waukesha	6,455	6,864	77	78	179	219	+184.4	199
Waupaca	1,025	1,377	19	26	26	30	+58.0	38
<i>Waushara</i>	574	612	6	20	20	22	+266.7	38
Winnebago	3,208	4,972	39	66	104	106	+171.8	116
Wood	1,260	1,948	25	35	48	60	+140.0	109
<i>State Total</i>	<i>122,816</i>	<i>141,617</i>	<i>2,159</i>	<i>3,090</i>	<i>5,114</i>	<i>5,794</i>	<i>+168.4</i>	<i>5923</i>
State Avg.	1,730	1,995	30.4	43.5	72.0	81.6		
Avg. Less Milwaukee	1,383	1,615	21.0	30.3	48.0	55.4		

NOTES TO THIS TABLE

# Jail capacities are from a Division (now Department) of Corrections survey in 1989.  
 \* Percentage change can not be calculated when the base year (1979) showed no confinements.  
 All numbers in italics represent estimates.  
 Menominee County did not operate a County Jail during the time period covered by this table.

#### IV. Conclusion

Over the past thirty years, county jails in Wisconsin have seen large increases in the number of adult inmates. In the past decade, the total number of adult jail admissions increased by 69 percent, while the Average Daily Population increased by 167.3 percent.

There have been several reasons for the increase in the inmate population of county jails. Changes in State Laws have resulted in mandatory jail terms for second and third convictions for Operating a Motor Vehicle While Intoxicated and for Operating After Revocation/Suspension of a driver's license. Changes in the drinking age and mandatory domestic violence arrest legislation have increased the number of jail admissions for such offenses as liquor law violations, disorderly conduct, and assault. The num-

ber of "state" prisoners in county jails has also increased, as a result of more parole revocations and/or delays in transport to state prisons.

A variety of changes in sentencing practices have been cited as reasons for the increases, including more jail sentences, longer jail sentences, and more jail sentences as a condition of probation. Many of these practices are probably related to overcrowding in the prison system. Other reasons cited for the increased populations in county jails include increases in crime and increases in the number of arrests made by the law enforcement community.