



# Drug Arrests Stayed High Even as Imprisonment Fell From 2009 to 2019

Racial disparities in enforcement narrowed substantially but remained significant

# The Pew Charitable Trusts

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## Overview

Fifty years ago, President Richard Nixon declared drug abuse “public enemy No. 1,” and Congress passed legislation that sought to expand treatment and research. However, at the same time, intensified enforcement launched what became known as the “War on Drugs.”<sup>1</sup> The harsher penalties led to a 1,216% increase in the state prison population for drug offenses, from 19,000 to 250,000 between 1980 and 2008.<sup>2</sup> And although prison populations have since declined, the number of people incarcerated for drug offenses remains substantially larger than in 1980—more than 171,000 in 2019—and drug misuse and its harms have continued to grow.<sup>3</sup> Prior research has found that no relationship exists between state drug imprisonment rates and drug use or drug overdose deaths and that, from 2009 to 2019, past-year illicit drug use among Americans 12 or older increased from 15% to nearly 21% and the overdose death rate more than tripled.<sup>4</sup>

To better identify and understand recent changes in and effects of the use of the criminal legal system to address drug problems, The Pew Charitable Trusts analyzed publicly available national data on drug arrests and imprisonment, drug treatment, and harm from drug misuse from 2009 through 2019—the most recent decade for which data is available. The study found divergent enforcement trends—high rates of arrest but substantially reduced incarceration—coupled with a lack of treatment options and high mortality rates among people with illicit drug dependence.<sup>5</sup>

- **Drug possession arrests held steady at more than a million a year**, in stark contrast with a large reduction in overall arrests, which dropped 29%.
- **Only 1 in 13 people who were arrested and had a drug dependency received treatment while in jail or prison.**
- **Racial disparities in drug enforcement declined.** Arrests of Black people for drug offenses fell by 37%, more than three times the drop among White people.

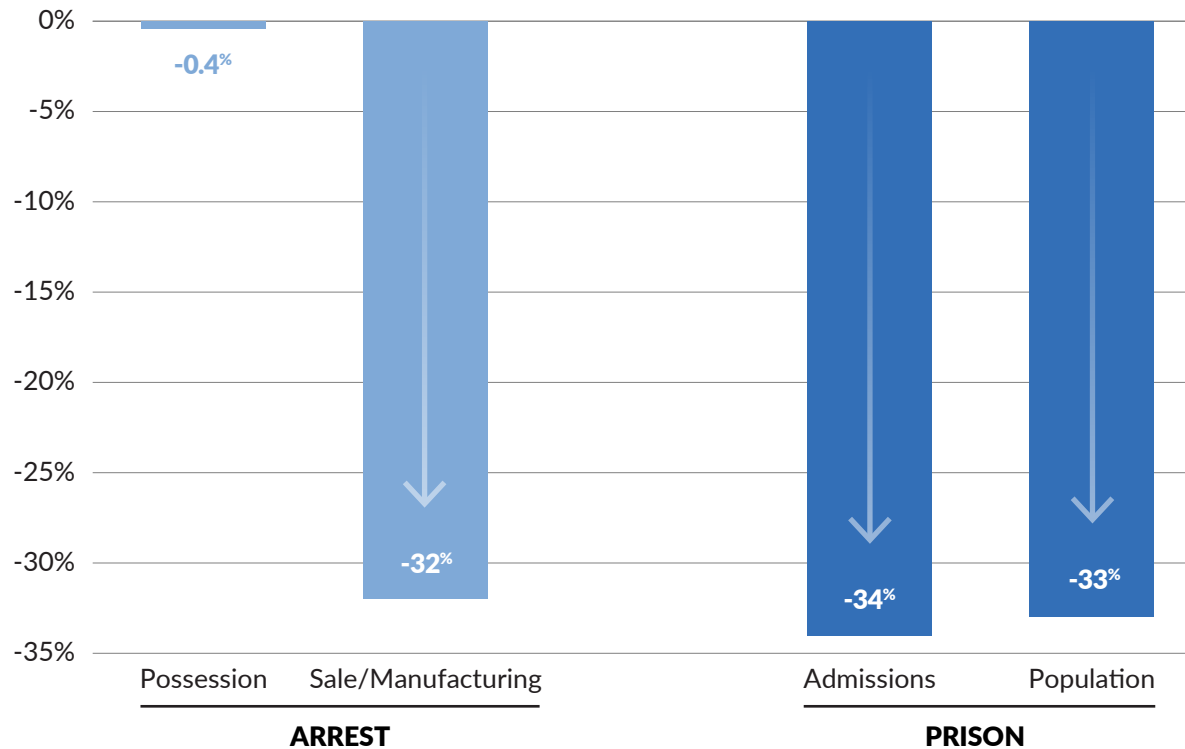
- **Increased arrests of White individuals for possession of methamphetamine** offset declines in marijuana arrests and drove the reduction in racial disparities.
- **The numbers of people admitted to and held in state prisons for drug offenses both fell by about a third**, accounting for 61% of the overall reduction in prison populations and 38% of the total decline in admissions.
- **The decline in the number of Black people incarcerated for drug offenses** made up 26% of the decrease in prison admissions and 48% of the drop in the prison population.
- **Drug- and alcohol-related mortality rates increased fivefold in prisons and threefold in jails** despite the decreases in the number of people in prison for drug offenses.

These trends indicate both an ongoing reliance on the criminal legal system to address drug misuse and that this strategy is costly and ineffective. Meaningful reductions in total drug arrests and drug-related deaths may not be achieved without shifting to a public health response that prioritizes evidence-based treatment approaches.

Figure 1

## Possession Arrests Stagnated, While Drug Sale Arrests, Numbers of People Sent to and Held in Prison All Fell by About a Third Over a Decade

Percentage change in drug-related arrests and state prison admissions, and population, 2009-19



Arrests for drug possession barely changed between 2009 and 2019, declining by less than one-half of 1%. However, the numbers of arrests for drug sales and of people admitted to and held in prison for drug offenses all fell by roughly a third during the same period.

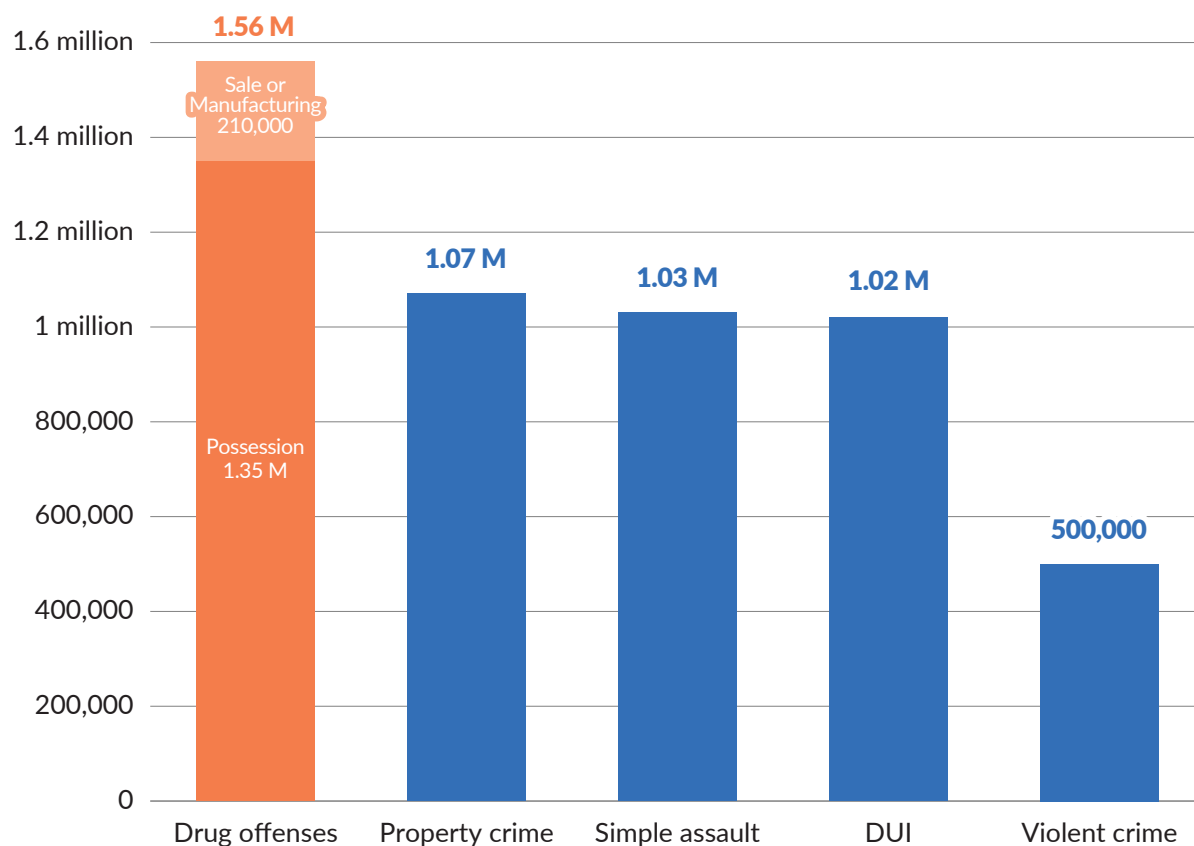
Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States, 2009-2019"; Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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Figure 2

## More People Were Arrested for Drug Possession Than Any Other Type of Crime in 2019

Number of arrests by offense category



Note: Property and violent crime categories include the standard Uniform Crime Report offenses. Non-UCR offense categories with less than 1 million arrests were excluded from this analysis. See methodology for details.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States, 2019"

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More than 1.5 million people were arrested in 2019 for drug offenses, more than any other crime category, accounting for 1 in 10 arrests nationwide. Property crime, simple assault, and driving under the influence all saw just over a million arrests each—roughly three-quarters the number of drug possession arrests. The number of arrests for violent crimes was only a third that of drug offenses.

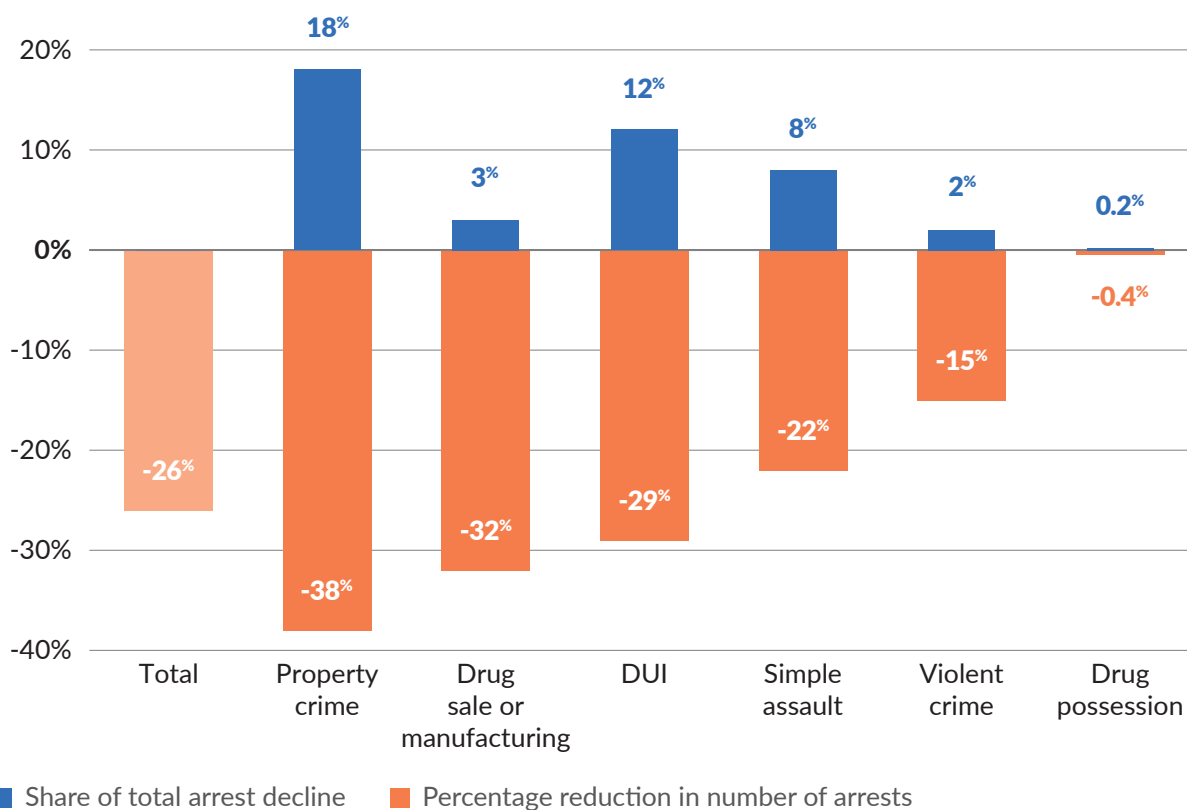
About 9 in 10 (87%) drug arrests were for possession; the rest were for sale or manufacturing.

Additionally, few of those arrested receive treatment while incarcerated. About 1.1 million people with past-year illicit drug dependence or misuse reported being arrested and booked in the past year, but of those, just 1 in 13—85,199—reported receiving drug treatment while in jail or prison.<sup>6</sup> Further, the drug- or alcohol-related mortality rate in jails increased from 9 in 100,000 in 2009 to 26 in 100,000 in 2019.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 3

## Arrests Remained Constant for Drug Possession but Declined for Other Crimes

Percentage change in arrests and share of overall decrease by offense category, 2009-19



Note: Non-UCR offense categories with less than 1 million arrests excluded from analysis.

Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States, 2009"; Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States, 2019"

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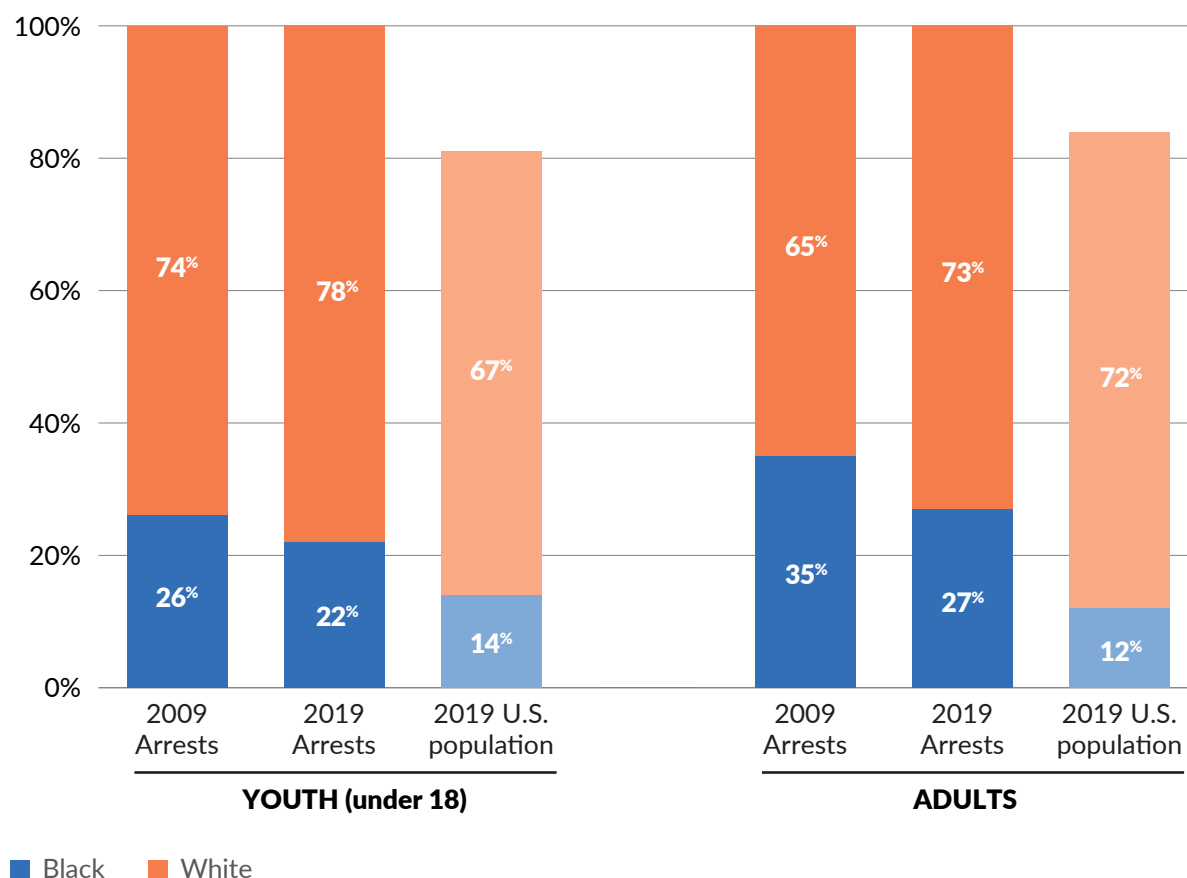
Drug possession arrest numbers barely budged, dipping by just 0.4%, or less than 6,000, in the decade from 2009 to 2019. By comparison, arrests for all other offenses tumbled by more than 25%, fueled by plummeting arrests for property crime (-650,000), driving under the influence (-416,000), and simple assault (-294,000).

Arrests also fell 32% for drug sales and manufacturing. But given the relatively small number of arrests in this category, that decline translated to only 3% of the drop in total arrests. However, because most people in prison for drug offenses in 2019 were there for drug sales and manufacturing offenses, the large decline in these arrests may have contributed to the decrease in prison admissions for drug offenses over the study period.

Figure 4

## Racial Disparities in Drug Arrests Fell, but Remained Pronounced

Youth and adult drug arrests by race, 2009 and 2019



Note: The FBI Crime in the U.S. data does not include ethnicity numbers (e.g., arrests of Hispanic individuals), so racial groups do not indicate ethnicity.

Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States, 2009, 2019"; U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey, 2019 One-Year Estimates"

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From 2009 to 2019, arrests of White individuals for drug offenses fell by 11%, while the number of Black individuals arrested for drug offenses dropped by more than three times that percentage (37%). These different rates of decline changed the racial composition of drug arrests.

Black adults made up 27% of drug arrests in 2019, compared with 35% in 2009. Despite these changes, disparities persisted. Black people made up 12% of the U.S. adult population but more than twice that share of adult drug arrests in 2019.<sup>8</sup>

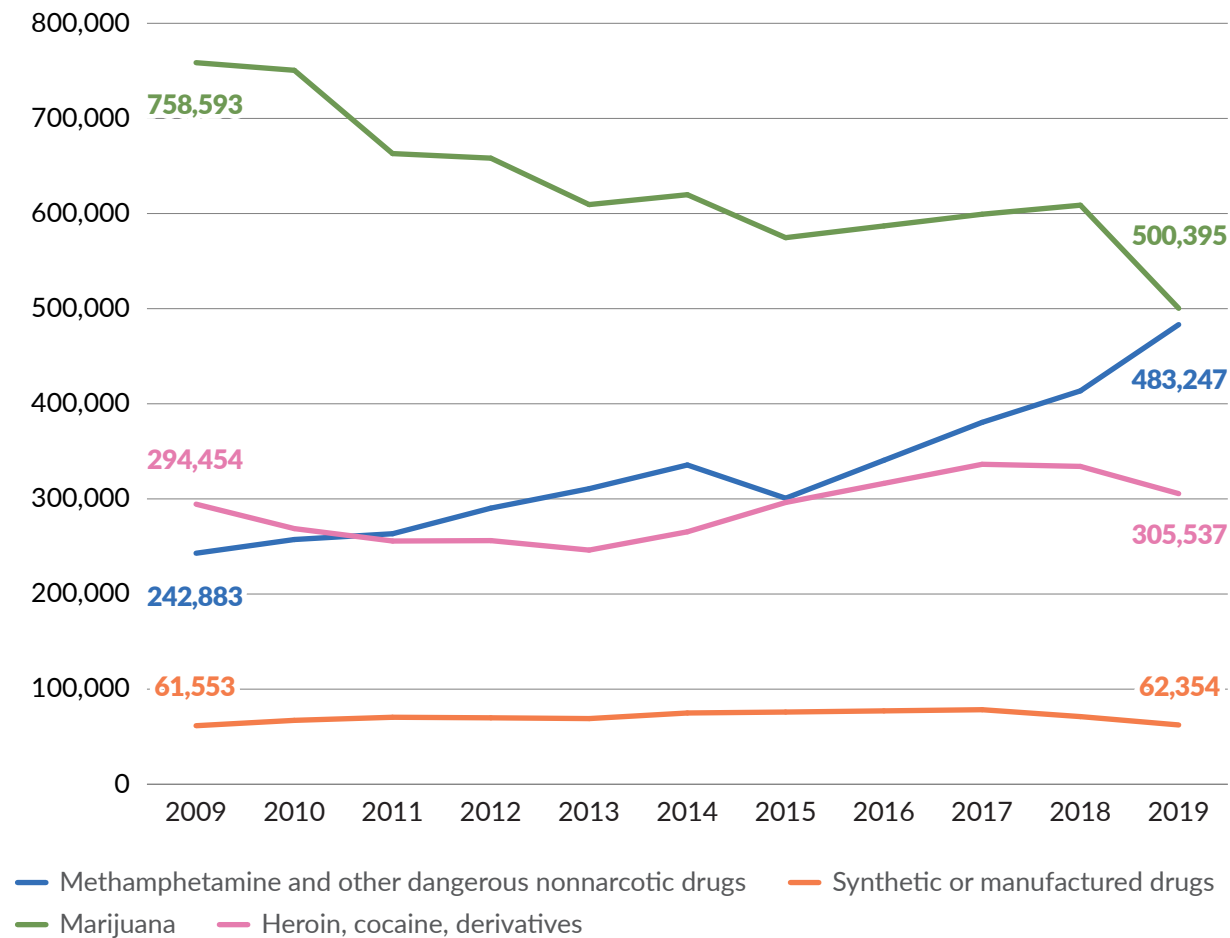
The share of drug arrests involving Black individuals under age 18 dropped from 26% in 2009 to 22% in 2019, continuing a trend that began at least a decade earlier.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Black youth made up 14% of the U.S. population under age 18 but 22% of juvenile drug arrests.<sup>10</sup>

Data for other races is inconsistent across this time period and so is not presented.

Figure 5

## Rising Arrests for Methamphetamine Offset Declines in Those for Marijuana

Drug possession arrests by substance type, 2009-19



The FBI estimates that annual methamphetamine possession arrests increased by about 240,400 from 2009 through 2019. Marijuana arrests followed the opposite trend, decreasing by more than 258,000.

Although marijuana accounted for more than 1 in 3 (37%) possession arrests in 2019, that represented a substantial drop from more than 1 in 2 (56%) in 2009. However, possession arrests for methamphetamine, which the FBI classifies as a “dangerous nonnarcotic” drug, virtually doubled over that span (up 99%) to rival those for marijuana.

In contrast with these large shifts for marijuana and methamphetamine, arrests for possession of opioids and cocaine and of synthetic narcotics hardly changed over the same decade.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Crime in the United States, 2009-2019”

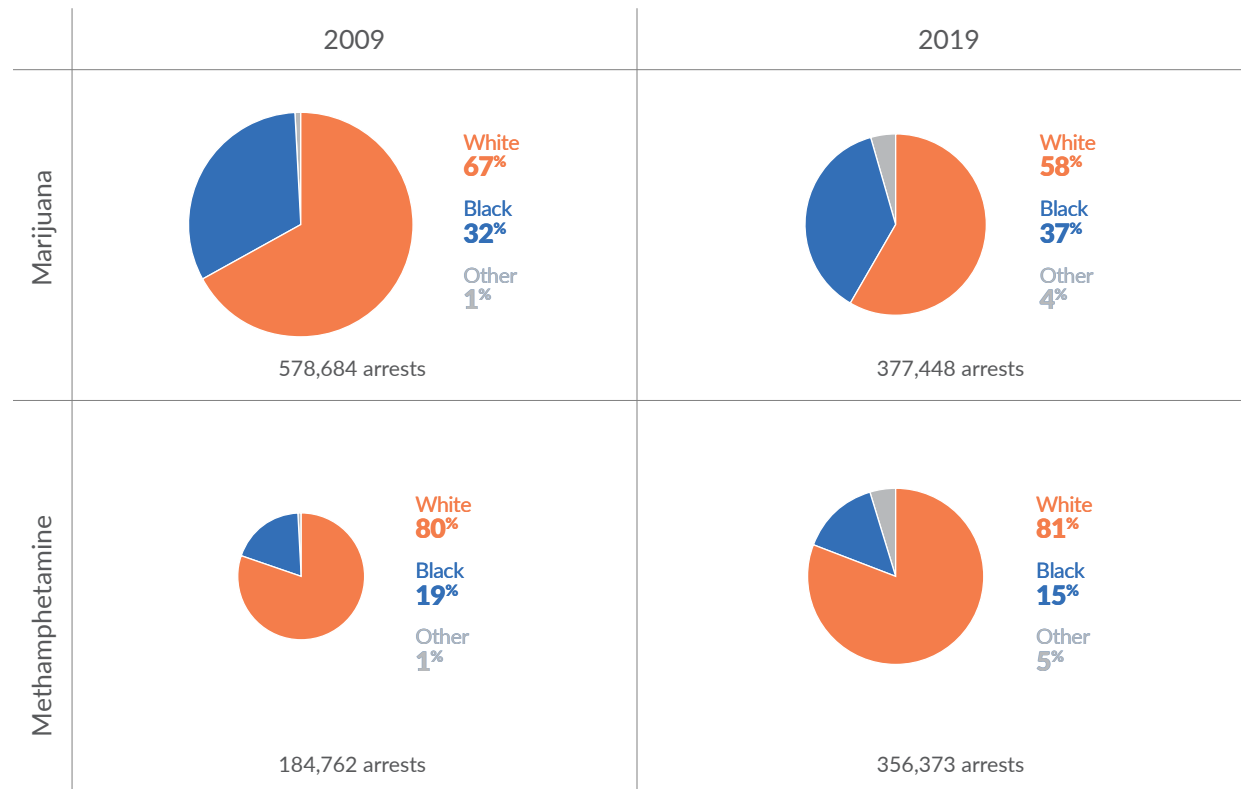
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Figure 6

## Number of White Individuals Arrested for Methamphetamine Spiked During the 2010s

Arrests by race and substance, 2009 and 2019



Note: According to FBI data, drug arrests for all other races accounted for less than 5% and were inconsistently reported across years and therefore were not analyzed. Latino individuals are included in the race figures. Crime Data Explorer presents actual numbers of arrests by reporting law enforcement agencies (about two-thirds of agencies reported in 2019) and is not estimated to a national level. The data is current as of Oct. 6, 2021.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime Data Explorer"

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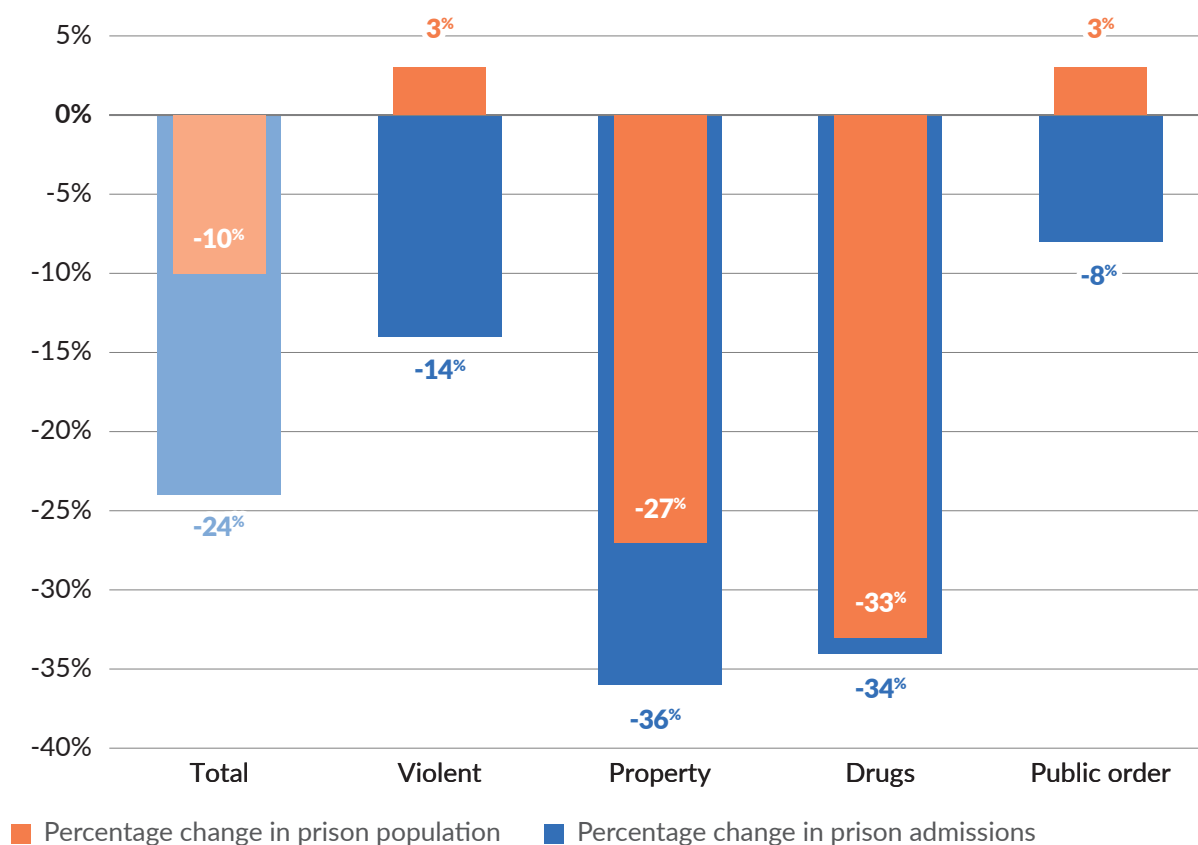
Racial disparities in drug arrests decreased between 2009 and 2019, in large part because of different racial profiles among methamphetamine and marijuana arrests. White individuals continued to make up a dominant share of the rapidly increasing number of methamphetamine arrests, while Black individuals made up a minority but growing share of decreasing marijuana arrests.

Arrests for methamphetamine increased at a greater rate among White than Black people (94% vs. 49%). And although marijuana arrests of Black and White individuals decreased, arrests of White people fell more. This caused the share of marijuana arrests involving Black individuals, who made up only about 13% of the U.S. population, to rise from 32% to 37%, while the proportion involving White people dropped from 67% to 58%.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 7

## In 39 States, the Number of People Sent to and in Prison for Drug Offenses Fell by About a Third Over 10 Years

Percentage change in prison admissions and populations, states with available data, 2009-19



Although possession arrests remained persistently high nationally from 2009 to 2019, in 39 states with available data for both years, the numbers of people admitted to and held in prison for drug offenses fell substantially, closely mirroring the drop in arrests for drug sale and manufacturing.

The population of people in prison for drug offenses fell by a third (-33%), the most of any offense category, and admissions for drug offenses dropped 34%, second only to a 36% drop in property offenses. Over the same period, total state prison admissions and population declined by 24% and 10%, respectively.

In addition, 2 in 3 of the almost 400,000 people in state prisons with a substance use disorder had received no treatment since admission, and the state prison mortality rate from drug or alcohol intoxication rose from 4 in 100,000 in 2009 to 22 in 100,000 in 2019, a nearly fivefold increase.<sup>12</sup>

Note: Figures include the 39 states that reported data for 2009 and 2019.

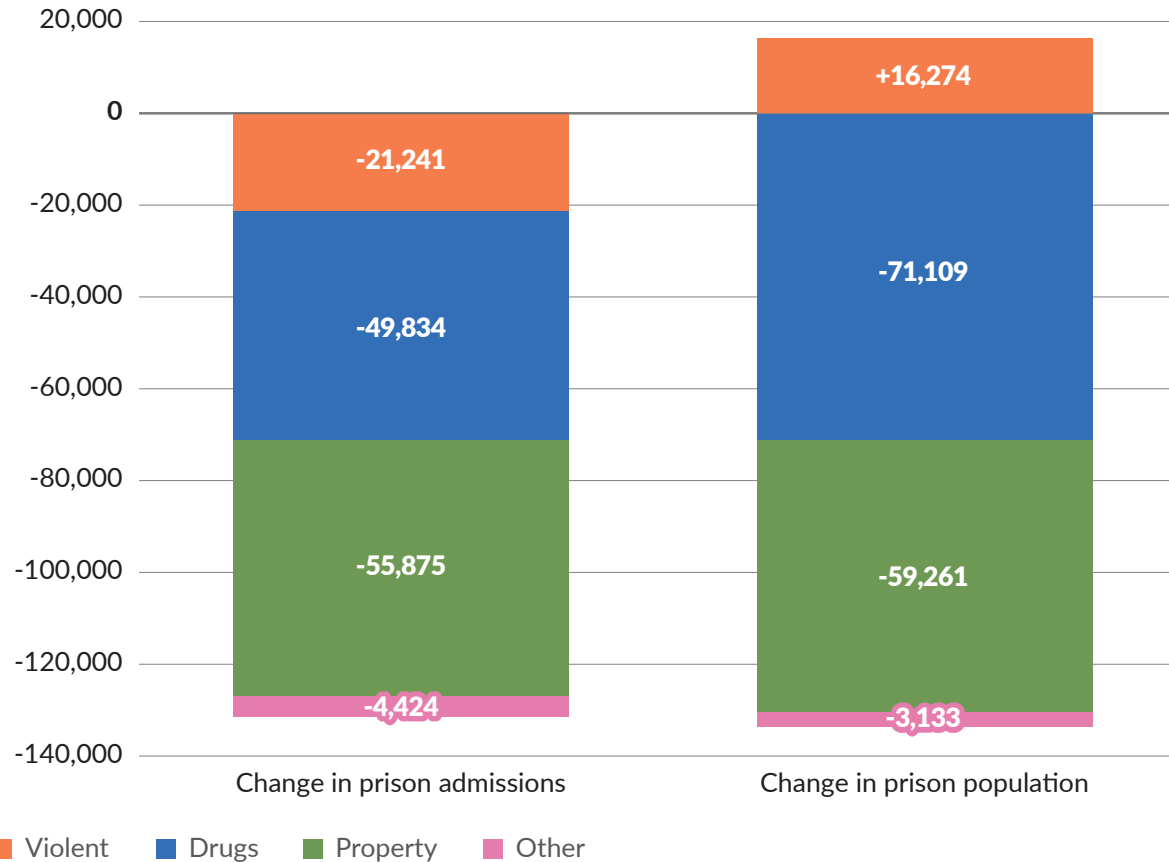
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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Figure 8

## Number of People in Prison Fell Over 10 Years, Driven by Decline in Incarceration for Drug Offenses

Change in prison admissions and population, by offense type, 2009-19



The prison population in the 39 states with available data dropped by approximately 117,000 individuals from 2009 to 2019. The decrease in the number of people in prison for drug offenses accounted for 61% of this total decline. Similarly, prison admissions fell by more than 131,000 from 2009 to 2019, with the drop in drug-related admissions accounting for 38% of the total.

In 2019, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that just 27% of people who were in prison for drug offenses were convicted of a possession offense only; the remaining 73% were convicted of drug sales and other commercial drug offenses.

Note: Figures include the 39 states that reported data for 2009 and 2019.

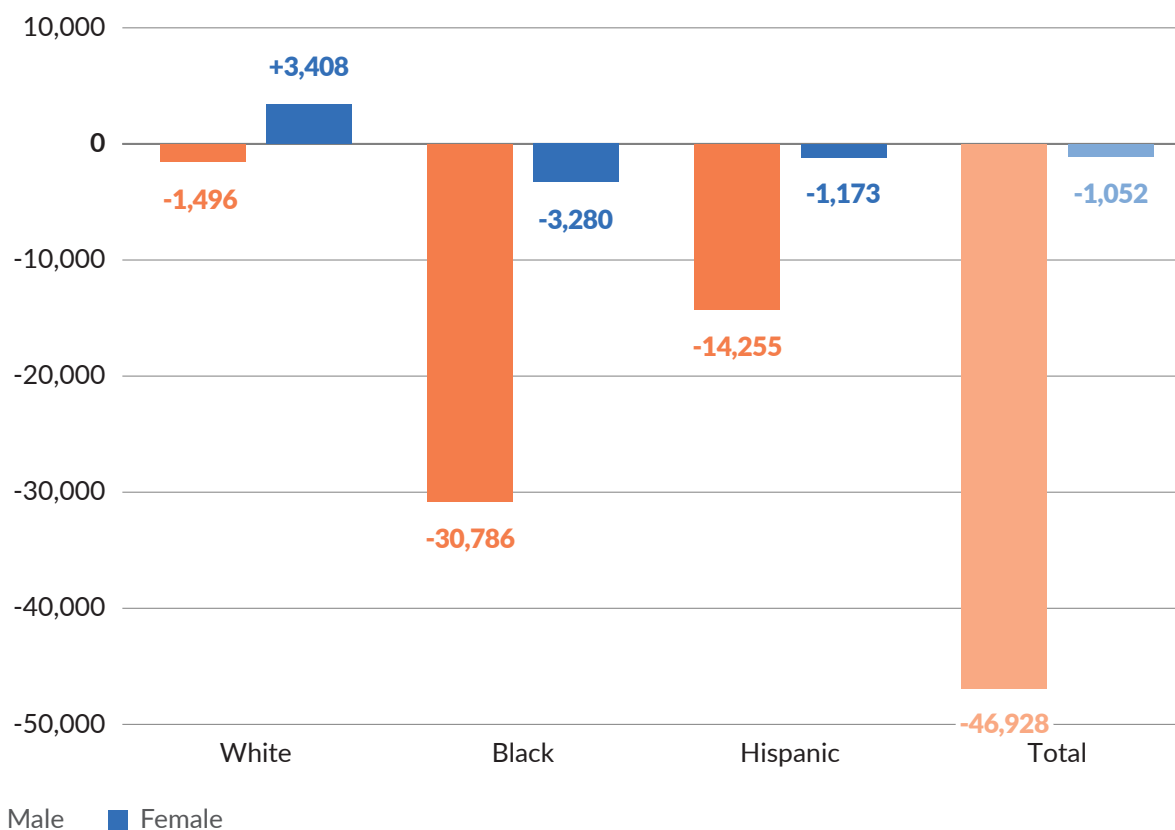
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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Figure 9

## The Number of Black and Hispanic People Entering State Prison for Drug Offenses Fell Dramatically From 2009 to 2019

10-year change in drug-related prison admissions by race and sex in 39 states with available data



Note: Admissions figures include the 39 states that reported data for 2009 and 2019.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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In the 39 states for which data was available, prison admissions of Black individuals for drug offenses decreased by 59% between 2009 and 2019, accounting for a quarter (26%) of the total drop in admissions over that span. Among Black men, drug-related admissions fell by 30,786 and made up 64% of the total decline in admissions for drug offenses.

The 4% increase in admissions of White individuals for drug offenses was driven by a 32% increase in the number of White females entering prison with drug convictions. By comparison, admissions for drug offenses fell 71% for Black females and 4% for White males.

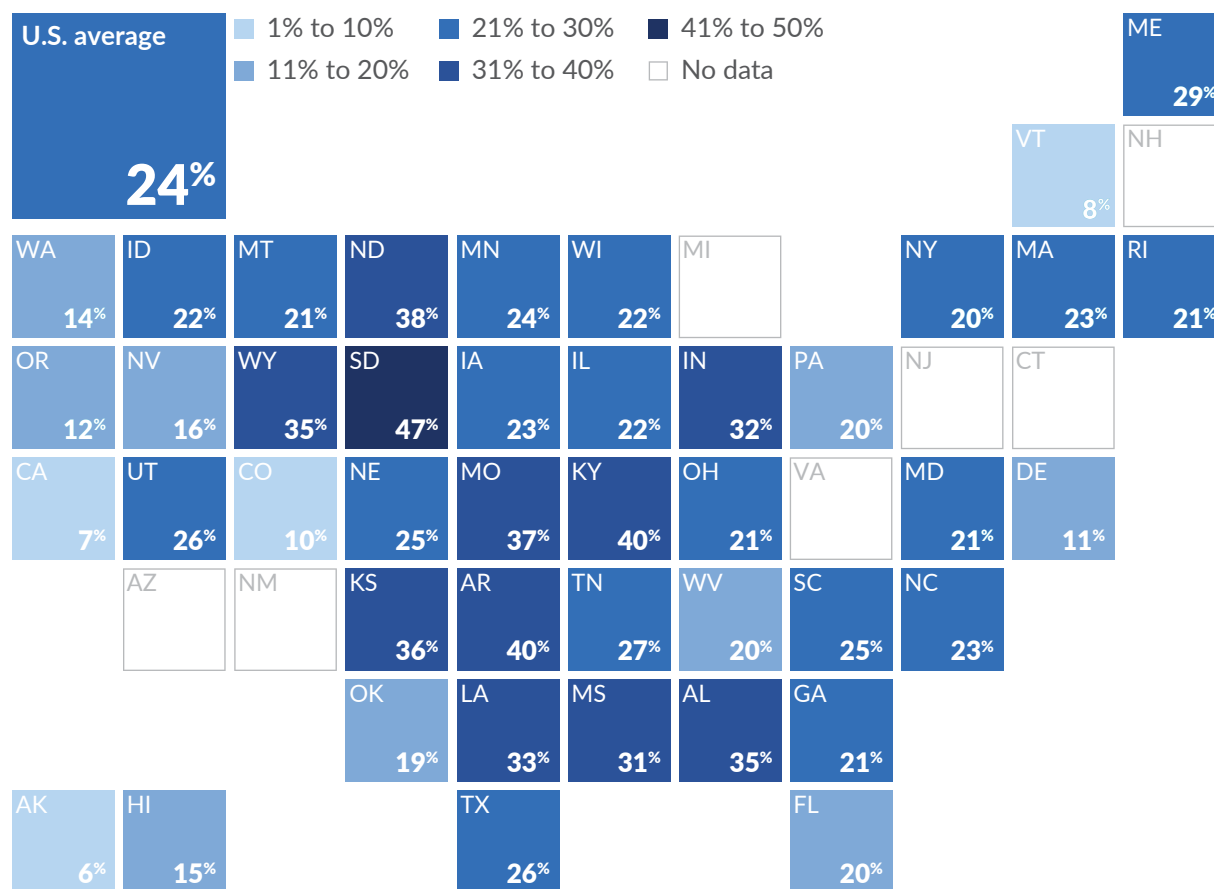
Similarly, from 2009 to 2019, the drug-related prison population declined by 50% among Black individuals but increased by 4% for White people.

Despite the larger decreases in drug-related admissions and population among Black individuals, disparities remain. Black people made up 28% of admissions and 36% of the population in prison for drug convictions in 2019, which are two and three times, respectively, their share of the general population.

Figure 10

## The Share of Prison Admissions That Were Drug-Related Varied Widely Across the Nation

Drug offenses as a percentage of total admissions by state, 2019



In 2019, people convicted of drug offenses accounted for 24% of total prison admissions in the 43 states with available data, but that figure varied widely by state, ranging from 10% or less of prison admissions in Alaska, California, Colorado, and Vermont to 40% or more in Arkansas, Kentucky, and South Dakota.

Across the 39 states where data was available for 2009 and 2019, admissions for drug offenses dropped 34%, the second-most of any category of crime behind only property offenses, which fell 36%. Total admissions in these states fell 24% during the decade, of which the decline in drug-related admissions accounted for 38%.

Note: The source data did not include a breakdown by type of drug offense.

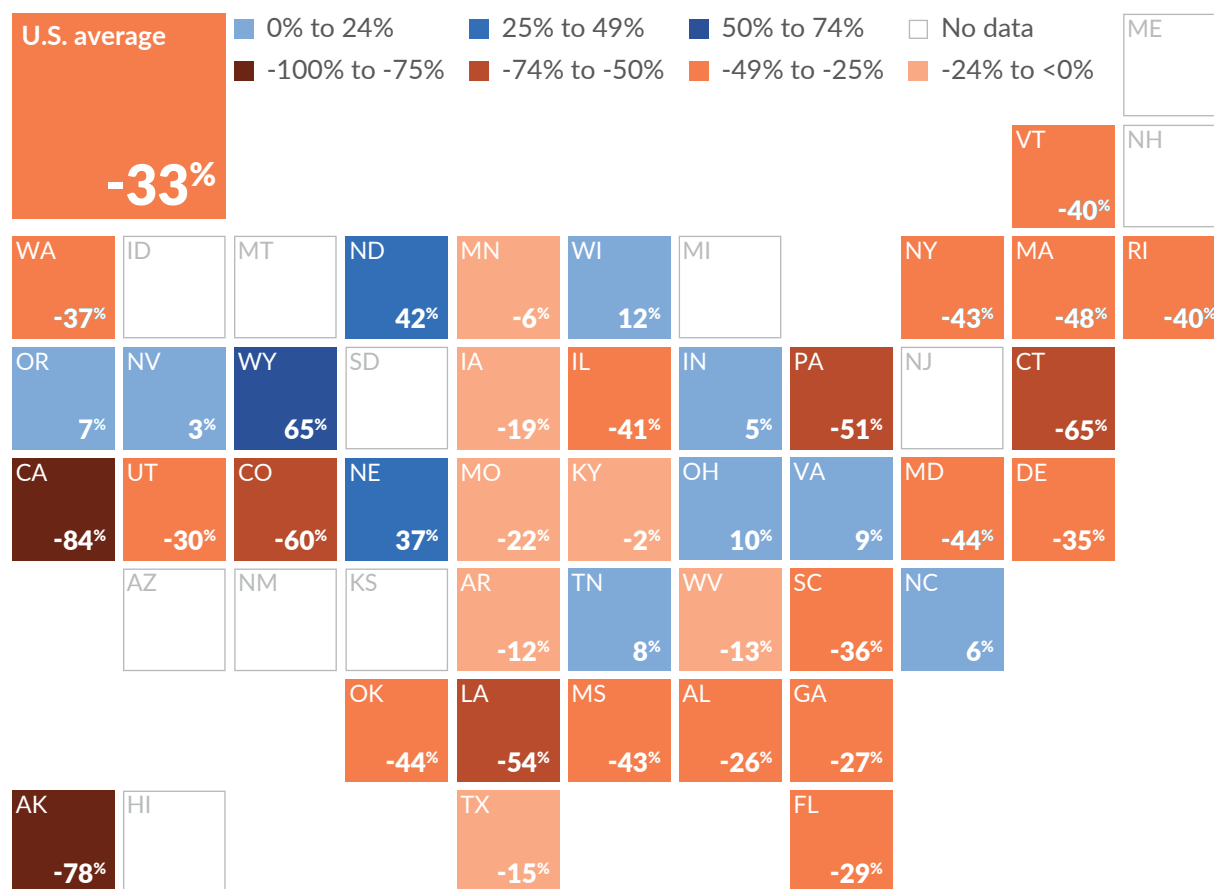
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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Figure 11

## In Most States, the Number of People in Prison for Drug Offenses Declined From 2009 to 2019, but 11 Had Increases

10-year percentage change in drug-related prison population by state



Among states with available data, the total number of people in prison for drug offenses dropped by a third (33%) from 2009 to 2019, and people sentenced for drug offenses fell from 18% of the total prison population to 13%.

However, the changes varied significantly by state. In Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming, the number of individuals in prison for drug offenses increased by at least a third, while 17 other states reduced their numbers by the same proportion, including six with decreases of 50% or more.

These differences may be because of changes in patterns of drug sales and use, government policy and practice, or a combination of the two. And in the absence of available national data on the number of people in local jails for drug offenses, this analysis could not assess the extent to which individuals who would have gone to prison in 2009 were instead being incarcerated in local jails in 2019.

Note: Population figures include the 39 states that reported data for 2009 and 2019.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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## Conclusion

Data shows that the U.S. continued to rely heavily on the criminal legal system to address substance misuse through at least 2019, when drug offenses accounted for about 1 in 10 arrests, including more than a million for possession, and roughly the same share of people in prison, totaling more than 143,000 individuals.

But over the 10 years ending in 2019, the trends in drug arrests, prison admissions, and prison population diverged. Arrests for drug possession during that period barely budged, even as arrests for other crimes fell by a quarter, and drug-related prison admissions and population both fell by about a third, driven in part by a 32% reduction in arrests for drug sales.

Drug arrests decreased by 37% among Black individuals and 11% among White individuals over the studied decade, but Black people were still twice as likely as White people to be arrested for drug offenses in 2019. Prison admissions among Black people convicted of drug offenses and the total number of Black adults in prison for drug convictions both declined, accounting for a quarter of the total drop in prison admissions and half the overall reduction in the prison population, respectively. By contrast, prison admissions and population of White individuals each increased by 4%, driven by spikes in the number of White females entering and in prison on drug convictions. However, racial disparities in imprisonment also continue, with Black individuals making up 28% and 36% of people admitted to or serving time in prison for drug offenses, respectively, but just 13% of the U.S. population as of 2019.

Fifty years of arresting and incarcerating people for drug offenses has produced poor public health and safety outcomes for society, particularly communities of color. And although the shifts in drug enforcement patterns in recent decades have reduced some racial disparities and decreased prison populations, they have done little to mitigate the public health consequences of drug misuse. Many people incarcerated across the country have substance use disorders, but few receive treatment. And drug mortality rates in both jails and prisons have continued to climb. More reforms are needed to further cut states' reliance on arrest and incarceration for addressing substance misuse and to ensure a more equitable criminal legal system for all Americans.

## Appendix: Methodology

This chartbook uses data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), and the National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (NCRP).

Pew's analysis did not include data from after the outbreak of COVID-19 and so did not examine the pandemic's impact on imprisonment. Additionally, the analysis did not produce national arrest estimates through 2020 because of poor data quality for that year.

### Uniform Crime Reporting Program

The UCR consists of four annual data collections: The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the Summary Reporting System (SRS), the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Program, and the Hate Crime Statistics Program.<sup>13</sup>

The FBI publishes data from the SRS and NIBRS annually in its Crime in the United States series, which provides estimates of the violent (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) and property (burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) crimes reported to law enforcement as well as arrests, clearances, and trends.<sup>14</sup> The series reports separately on drug arrests for sale and possession but does not report the type of drug.

UCR data is also available online via the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE), which provides estimates of national-level arrests based on the SRS and NIBRS.<sup>15</sup> The CDE splits drug possession and sale arrests by the type of drug, which allows for a more granular view of each category. Because the data is voluntarily submitted by law enforcement agencies each year, the number of agencies reporting varies from year to year; on average, 70% of agencies reported each year from 2009 to 2019. (See Table A.1.) Additionally, the agencies do not provide the demographic composition for their reporting areas, so demographic changes over time (and subsequently how that may affect the arrest figures) are not captured.



Table A.1

## Number and Percentage of Agencies Reporting to the Crime Data Explorer Each Year, 2009-19

Year	Number of agencies reported	Total number of agencies in U.S.	% reported
2009	12,915	18,037	72%
2010	12,725	18,145	70%
2011	12,627	18,241	69%
2012	12,890	18,295	70%
2013	12,427	18,409	68%
2014	12,888	18,492	70%
2015	13,434	18,435	73%
2016	13,661	18,466	74%
2017	13,684	18,448	74%
2018	13,057	18,560	70%
2019	11,788	18,671	63%

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime Data Explorer"

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## National Survey on Drug Use and Health

The NSDUH, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, has collected national data on substance use (including tobacco, alcohol, and drug use), mental health, and other health-related issues among a sample of approximately 70,000 Americans age 12 and older annually since 1971.<sup>16</sup> For this analysis, researchers used the online analysis tool from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive to assess drug dependence among those arrested and treatment among those with drug dependence.

## National Corrections Reporting Program

The NCRP (administered by the BJS since 1983) compiles data on admissions, releases, parole exits, and populations from state and federal prisons.<sup>17</sup> Because data is submitted voluntarily by state corrections and parole departments, the number of states included varies from year to year. For the analysis of drug admissions by state, Pew researchers included all 43 states that provided data for 2019; only Arizona, Connecticut, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Virginia did not report for that year.

For the analysis of drug admissions and populations by sex and race, researchers used only the states that reported separate admissions and populations data in 2009 and 2019. Thirty-nine states provided data for the separate analyses of admissions and populations, but only 36 reported both types of data. (See Table A.2.)

Table A.2

## States Reporting Drug-Related Admissions and Populations Data for 2009 and 2019

	Admissions	Populations		Admissions	Populations
Alabama	✓	✓	Nebraska	✓	✓
Alaska	✓	✓	Nevada	✓	✓
Arkansas	✓	✓	New York	✓	✓
California	✓	✓	North Carolina	✓	✓
Colorado	✓	✓	North Dakota	✓	✓
Connecticut	✗	✓	Ohio	✓	✓
Delaware	✓	✓	Oklahoma	✓	✓
Florida	✓	✓	Oregon	✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓	Pennsylvania	✓	✓
Hawaii	✓	✗	Rhode Island	✓	✓
Idaho	✓	✗	South Carolina	✓	✓
Illinois	✓	✓	South Dakota	✓	✗
Indiana	✓	✓	Tennessee	✓	✓
Iowa	✓	✓	Texas	✓	✓
Kentucky	✓	✓	Utah	✓	✓
Louisiana	✓	✓	Vermont	✗	✓
Maryland	✓	✓	Virginia	✗	✓
Massachusetts	✓	✓	Washington	✓	✓
Minnesota	✓	✓	West Virginia	✓	✓
Mississippi	✓	✓	Wisconsin	✓	✓
Missouri	✓	✓	Wyoming	✓	✓

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"

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The analysis of drug admissions and populations by race and sex also excluded records for which race was missing, which decreased the total sample. Races included in the analysis were non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic (of any race), and Other. The Other category was not further delineated and was not reported on.

To avoid capturing jail systems for the states—Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont—that have unified state-level prison and jail systems, Pew researchers limited the results of all analyses to individuals with sentences longer than one year.<sup>18</sup>

Further, to ensure that the inclusion and exclusion of some states from each analysis did not alter the outcomes, researchers performed validity checks. Because 2018 is the most recent year for which BJS statistics are available, the researchers compared 2018 NCRP population and BJS population data. The 48 states with available NCRP population data for 2018 had relatively similar prison populations to what BJS reported in 2018. The largest differences were in states with fewer residents, where relatively small changes accounted for a greater proportion of the prison population. Additionally, the 38 states available for a 2008 to 2018 NCRP comparison made up 93% of the total 2018 population reported by the BJS, giving researchers confidence that the analyses probably include a considerable portion of the population.

For the 2009 to 2019 NCRP data used, the researchers also compared the demographic makeup of the included and excluded states using the American Community Survey, 2019 one-year estimates.<sup>19</sup> The states included in the admission and population analyses accounted for 85% and 88%, respectively, of the total U.S. population. In terms of demographic composition, the included states were slightly different from the excluded states for percent White, percent Black, and percent Hispanic. However, the included states were closer to the demographic makeup of the entire U.S. when compared with those that were excluded. (See Table A.3.)

Table A.3

**NCRP Included and Excluded State Demographics, 2009-2019**

	Admission states		Population states		Total U.S.
	Included	Excluded	Included	Excluded	
% state population	85%	15%	88%	12%	100%
% Male	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%
% White (NH)	59%	64%	59%	64%	60%
% Black (NH)	13%	11%	13%	9%	12%
% Hispanic	19%	16%	19%	17%	18%

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables (ICPSR 38048)"; U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey, 2019 One-Year Estimates"

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## Endnotes

- 1 Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972, 92-255, United States Congress (1972), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg65.pdf>; The American Presidency Project, “Remarks About an Intensified Program for Drug Abuse Prevention and Control,” accessed Aug. 20, 2021, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-about-intensified-program-for-drug-abuse-prevention-and-control>.
- 2 Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Correctional Populations in the United States” (1995), <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/153849NCJRS.pdf>; H.C. West, W.J. Sabol, and S.J. Greenman, “Prisoners in 2009” (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p09.pdf>.
- 3 E.A. Carson, “Prisoners in 2020: Statistical Tables” (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p20st.pdf>.
- 4 H. Hedegaard, M. Warner, and A.M. Miniño, “Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 1999-2016” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017), <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db294.pdf>; H. Hedegaard, A.M. Miniño, and M. Warner, “Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 1999-2019” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020), <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db394-H.pdf>; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Table 1.1B Types of Illicit Drug Use in Lifetime, Past Year, and Past Month Among Persons Aged 12 or Older: Percentages, 2008 and 2009” (2009), <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/2009%20NSDUH%20Detailed%20Tables/2009%20NSDUH%20substance%20use%20detailed%20tables.pdf>; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Table 1.1B Types of Illicit Drug Use in Lifetime, Past Year, and Past Month Among Persons Aged 12 or Older: Percentages, 2018 and 2019” (2019), <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2019-nsduh-detailed-tables>; The Pew Charitable Trusts, “More Imprisonment Does Not Reduce State Drug Problems” (2018), <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2018/03/more-imprisonment-does-not-reduce-state-drug-problems>. Pew’s research on state drug imprisonment rates defined “drug use” as use of illegal drugs other than marijuana.
- 5 The 2020 arrest data that was available at the time of this publication was too incomplete for national analysis.
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- 7 E.A. Carson, “Mortality in Local Jails, 2000-2019: Statistical Tables” (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/mlj0019st.pdf>. The Bureau of Justice Statistics does not provide separate mortality rates for drugs and alcohol.
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