

DESCRIPTION

The American criminal justice system holds almost 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 1,852 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,163 local jails, and 80 Indian Country jails as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories.¹ Since about the year 2000 the total prison population increased by 14% in the U.S. A majority (56%) of people under the control of the American criminal justice system are on probation. Despite receiving little public attention, probation is a significant component of each state's criminal justice system.² People who are in jail end up facing consequences beyond incarceration itself, including lost wages, worsened physical and mental health, and possible loss of custody of children, a job, or a place to live.³

HOW WE ARE DOING

In 2017, the Ramsey County Correctional Facility (a 556-bed facility, housing both males and females who have received a sentence from the court for up to one year) served 4,188 inmates. In addition to housing Ramsey County offenders, Dakota County contracts with Ramsey County to board its female offenders. Since 2013, the number of admissions to RCCF has decreased by 8 percent. Most admissions in 2017 (42 percent) were people age 25-34. Black men made up 45 percent of the 2,018 male admissions and black females made up 29 percent of the 405 Ramsey County female admissions. Over the past five years, the percentage of female admissions has increased (39 percent in 2013 versus 48 percent in 2017). There were 11,677 adults on active supervision (probation or supervised release) served by Ramsey County Community Corrections, a decrease of 21 percent since 2013. Over the past five years, adults have been on probation for a longer duration. In 2013, 33 percent of adults removed from probation were open more than two years. In 2017, 43 percent were open for more than two years.

DISPARITIES

Race is a defining characteristic of the criminal justice system. People of color are dramatically overrepresented in prisons and jails. These racial disparities are particularly stark for blacks, who make up 40% of the incarcerated population in the U.S. despite representing only 13% of U.S. residents.⁴ Recent research suggests that much of the black-white disparity in the imposition of prison sentences is attributable to the manner in which dark-skinned blacks are treated. The study found that dark-skinned blacks were especially likely to receive unconditional prison sentences even when legal factors were controlled. "The most novel finding [was that] overall, whites with features that are more typically associated with blacks – darker skin tone and more Afrocentric facial features – are treated more punitively."⁴

RISK FACTORS

Poverty, in particular, perpetuates the cycle of incarceration, while incarceration itself leads to greater poverty.⁵ Estimates report that nearly 40% of all crimes are directly attributable to poverty and the vast majority (80%) of incarcerated individuals are low-income.

Information to note

- During 2017, 45% of male admissions to the Ramsey County Correctional Facility were African-American men.
- Since 2013, the number of adults on probation or supervised release has decreased by 21%.

¹Wagner P, Sawyer W. Mass incarceration: the whole pie 2018. Prison Policy Initiative. 2018. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2018.html>. Published March 14, 2018. Accessed July 2018.

²Rabury B, Wagner P. Correctional control: incarceration and supervision by state. Prison Policy Initiative. 2016. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/50statepie.html>. Published June 1, 2016. Accessed July 2018.

³Subramanian R, Delaney R, Roberts S, Fishman N, McGarry P. Incarceration's front door: The misuse of jails in America. Vera Institute. 2015. <https://www.vera.org/publications/incarcerations-front-door-the-misuse-of-jails-in-america>. Published February 2015. Updated July 29, 2015. Accessed July 2018.

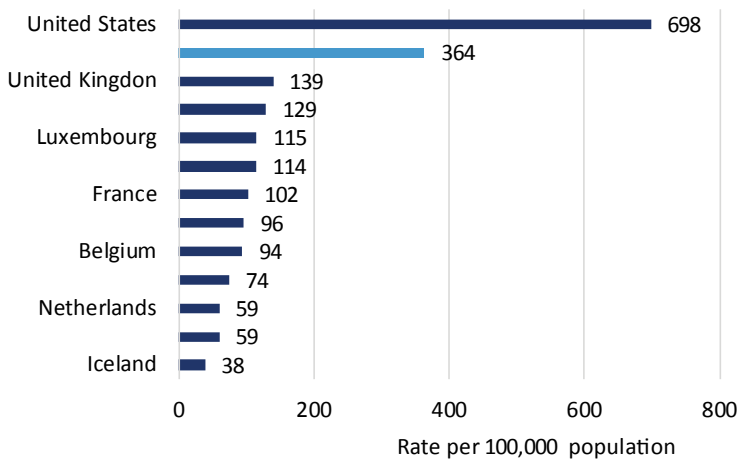
⁴King R, Johnson B. A punishing look: skin tone and afrocentric features in the halls of justice. *American Journal of Sociology*. 2016;122(1):90-124. doi:10.1086/686941.

⁵deVuono-powell S, Schweidler C, Walters A, Zohrabi A. Who pays? The true cost of incarceration on families. Ella Baker Center, Forward Together, Research Action Design. 2015. <http://whopaysreport.org/executive-summary/>. Published September 2015. Accessed July 2018.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

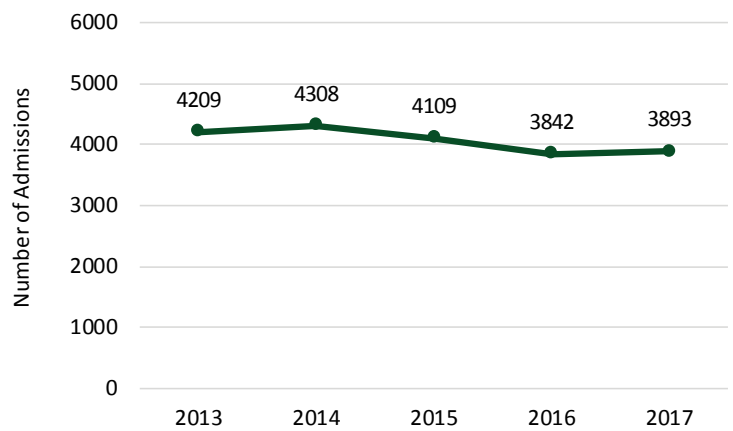
Ramsey County Community Corrections is exploring ways to increase the success of probationers in the community and reduce the use of confinement which disproportionately impacts communities of color in Ramsey County. Community Corrections has partnered with the Robina Institute at the University of Minnesota Law School and the Second Judicial District to review and reform probation revocation rates and processes in order to increase rates of successful completion of probation and reduce probation revocations. In addition, recognizing the intersection of race, poverty and criminal justice, Ramsey County Community Corrections has reduced the probation supervision fee from \$300 to \$150 for clients monitored at lower intensity at the Probation Reporting Center.

Incarceration Rates Comparing Minnesota and Founding NATO Countries



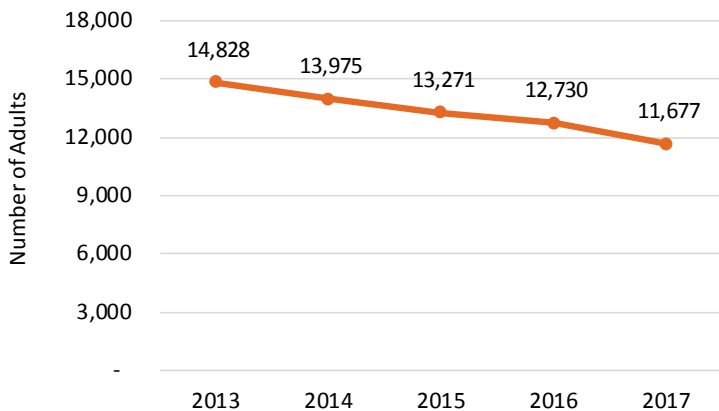
Source: Prison Policy Initiative.⁶

Admissions to the Ramsey County Correctional Facility Over Time



Source: Ramsey County Community Corrections.

Adults on Probation or Supervised Release Over Time, Ramsey County



Source: Ramsey County Community Corrections

⁶ Wagner P, Sawyer W. States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2018. Prison Policy Initiative. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>. Accessed July 2018.