



Environmental Scan 2015



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Introduction

Beginning in the late 1990's, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Information Center began scanning social, economic, and corrections issues to inform the development of programs and services offered by NIC. This report, now in its 10th edition, has continued to evolve into a popular tool that corrections practitioners also use to inform their work in jails, prisons, and community corrections. Because there are many issues beyond what is addressed in this environmental scan that will potentially influence corrections, this report is intended to give a broad overview of selected current and anticipated trends and not intended to be comprehensive.

The method for selecting articles, reports, and other materials was based on a scan of popular magazines, newspapers, and websites as well as corrections-specific publications. As part of the ongoing work of the Information Center in supporting the work of corrections practitioners, staff regularly monitors reports and publications from state, national, and independent sources. The report is arranged starting with global and broader influences on corrections and moves to specific corrections issues. Each section of the report gives an overview of the topic followed by corrections-specific trends and developments in this area.

Added to the report this year is the final section on Mass Incarceration.

International Developments

Our International Developments section begins with a look at Gallup’s top world news discoveries for 2015, then moves to global economic issues, world population statistics, the Global Peace Index, and finally prison populations and trends across the globe.

- On December 30, 2015, **Gallup** editors selected their Top 10 World Findings of 2015. Included in this list were:
 - #1 – Worldwide, real global unemployment is 32%.
 - #3 – The optimism in the job market in North America and Europe is at its highest since the global economic downturn.
 - #4 – Even before the recent influx of migrants to Europe, Europeans on average were the most negative toward immigration.
 - #5 - Only 6% of migrants from Syria want to move to the United States or Canada.

Source: Gallup World, *Gallup’s Top 10 World Findings of 2015*, December 30, 2015
(<http://www.gallup.com/poll/187973/gallup-top-world-findings-2015.aspx>)

- The **World Economic Forum** publishes “a comprehensive series of reports which examine in detail the broad range of global issues it seeks to address with stakeholders as part of its mission of improving the state of the world.” Key reports include:
 - *Global Risks 2015* – Based on a survey of the World Economic Forum’s multi-stakeholder communities, the report maps 28 global risks according to likelihood and potential effect. The top five are listed below:

Likelihood of Risk – Top 5	Impact of Risk – Top 5
Interstate conflict	Water crises
Extreme weather events	Spread of infectious diseases
Failure of national governance	Weapons of mass destruction
State collapse or crisis	Interstate conflict
Unemployment or underemployment	Failure of climate-change adaptation

- *Outlook on the Global Agenda 2015* - Features an analysis of the Top 10 trends that will preoccupy our experts for the next 12-18 months (listed below), as well as the key challenges facing the world's regions, an overview of global leadership and governance, and the emerging issues that will define our future.

Top 10 Trends of 2015
Deepening income inequality
Persistent jobless growth
Lack of leadership
Rising geostrategic competition
Weakening of representative democracy
Rising pollution in the developing world
Increasing occurrence of severe weather events
Intensifying nationalism
Increasing water stress
Growing importance of health in the economy

- *The Global Gender Gap Report 2015* – This year marks the tenth year of this report which allows for an overview of progress for gender equality. No country has achieved gender equality—Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Ireland have closed over 80% of their gender gaps.
- *The Global Competitiveness Report 2015-16* – Assesses the competitiveness landscape of 144 economies, providing insight into the drivers of their productivity and prosperity. The report demonstrates that competitiveness fuels growth and resilience. The top five economies on the Global Competitiveness Index for 2015-2016 are listed below:

Economy	Score
Switzerland	5.76
Singapore	5.68
United States	5.61
Germany	5.53
Netherlands	5.50

Source: World Economic Forum, *Reports*, Accessed January 12, 2016
<http://www.weforum.org/reports>

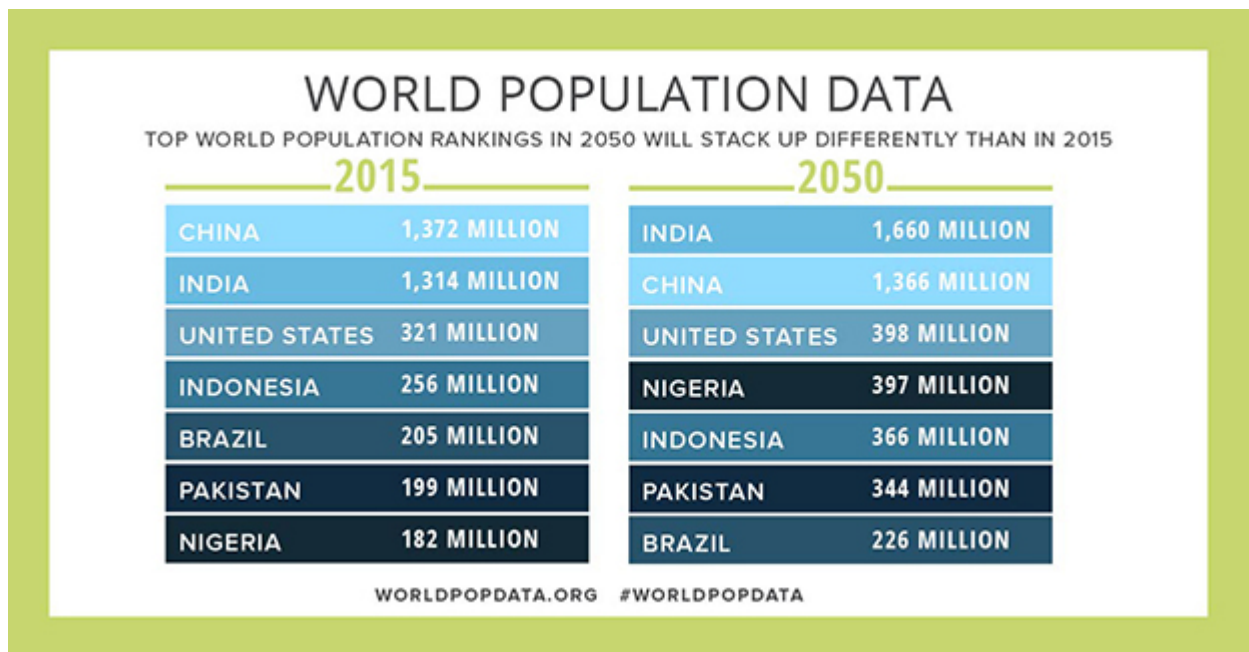
- **International Monetary Fund** also focuses on the world economy. The **IMF** publishes the *World Economic Outlook Reports* twice a year. The reports give an overview of global economic developments. Below are a few highlights from the analysis in the report from October 2015:
 - With declining commodity prices, depreciating emerging market currencies, and increasing financial market volatility, downside risks to the outlook have risen, particularly for emerging markets and developing economies.
 - Global activity is projected to gather some pace in 2016. In advanced economies, the modest recovery that started in 2014 is projected to strengthen further.
 - In emerging market and developing economies, the outlook is projected to improve. In particular, growth in countries in economic distress in 2015 (including Brazil, Russia, and some countries in Latin America and the Middle East), while remaining weak or negative, is projected to be higher next year, more than offsetting the expected gradual slowdown in China.

Source: International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook (WEO) Adjusting for Lower Commodity Prices. October 2015* (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2015/02/>)

IMF Data Mapper this interactive map displays world economic data and statistics (<http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/index.php>)

- The **Population Reference Bureau (PRB)** offers detailed information on 20 population, health, and environment indicators for more than 200 countries in the *2015 World Population Data Sheet (WPDS)*. This year's data sheet has a special focus on assessing the state of women's empowerment globally. The PRB data shows that an earnings gap between men and women remains, as well as an acceptance of gender-based violence. Financial inclusion for women is expanding globally, and their life expectancy averages 73 years old compared to 69 for men.

PRB's population projections for 2015 and by 2050:



Source: Population Reference Bureau, *World Population Data Sheet 2015*
(<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2015/2015-world-population-data-sheet.aspx>)

- The **Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP)** produces an annual *Global Peace Index (GPI) Report* that ranks the nations of the world by their peacefulness and identifies drivers of peace. Specifically, “the GPI measures peace in 162 countries according to 23 indicators that gauge the absence of violence or the fear of violence.” Key findings from the 2015 report include the following:
 - 81 countries have become more peaceful,
 - Europe retains its position as the most peaceful region with 15 of the top 20 most peaceful countries,
 - The Middle East and North Africa are now the world’s least peaceful regions,
 - The Global Economic Impact of violence reached US\$14.3 trillion last year or 13.4% of the global GDP last year.

Source: Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index 2015*, June 2015(<http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#page/news/1187>)and interactive map (<http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/global-peace-index/2015>)

- The **World Prison Brief (WPB)** provides information on “prison populations and prison population rates per 100,000 of the national population, on the use of imprisonment for women and juveniles, on the extent of pre-trial imprisonment and on prison overcrowding, as well as a record of the national ministries responsible for prisons and contact details for prison administrations.” The United States is ranked number one in the total prison population with 2,217,000 people in prisons and jails.

Source: International Centre for Prison Studies, *World Prison Brief*; September 2000 (updated monthly) (<http://www.prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief>)

Demographic and Social Trends

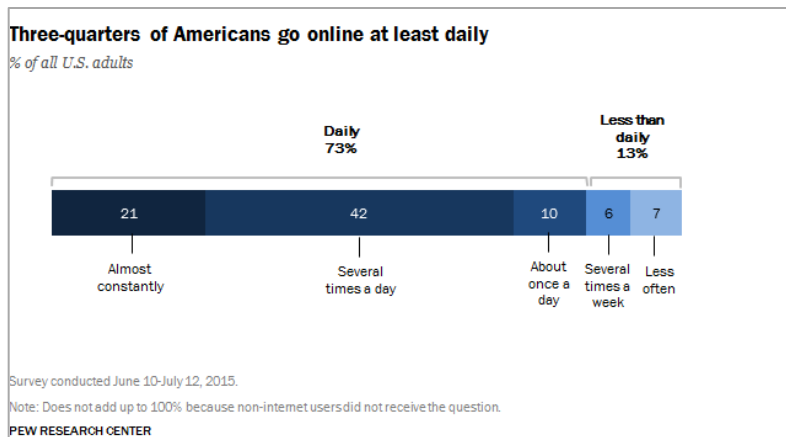
The statistics below from the United States Census Bureau, Pew Research Center, and the Urban Institute highlight changes in the demographic makeup of the United States in terms of population, immigration, poverty, and incomes. A report from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences highlights changes to state funding for higher education at public research universities.

- As of late January 2016, the **U.S. Census Bureau** estimated the U.S. population to be 322 million, 4.4% of the world's 7.3 billion people. This Census Bureau population webpage also provides population estimates by region, age and sex, and most populous and highest density by state, county, and city.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. & World Population Clocks*, January 20, 2016
(<http://www.census.gov/popclock/>)

- The **Pew Research Center** reported in December 2015 that 21% of Americans go online almost constantly. The results are from a survey they conducted in the summer of 2015.



Source: Pew Research Center, *One-fifth of American report going online 'almost constantly'*, December 8, 2015. (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/08/one-fifth-of-americans-report-going-online-almost-constantly/>)

- **Pew Research Center** also reported that the population in the United States is aging. The number of people aged 65 and older is expected to double by 2050. Germany and Italy are already where the U.S. will be in 2050.

Source: Pew Research Center, *Family Support in Graying Societies*, May 21, 2015. (<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/05/21/family-support-in-graying-societies/>)

- The **Urban Institute** created a map tool that predicts trends in the American population as part of its *Mapping America's Futures* series. The interactive map allows the user to change the setting for Birth, Death, and Migration rates, to filter for Age, Race, and Boundary areas, and to choose the Year range.

Source: Urban Institute, *A Tour of America's Futures*, accessed January 22, 2016. (<http://apps.urban.org/features/mapping-americas-futures/#feature>)

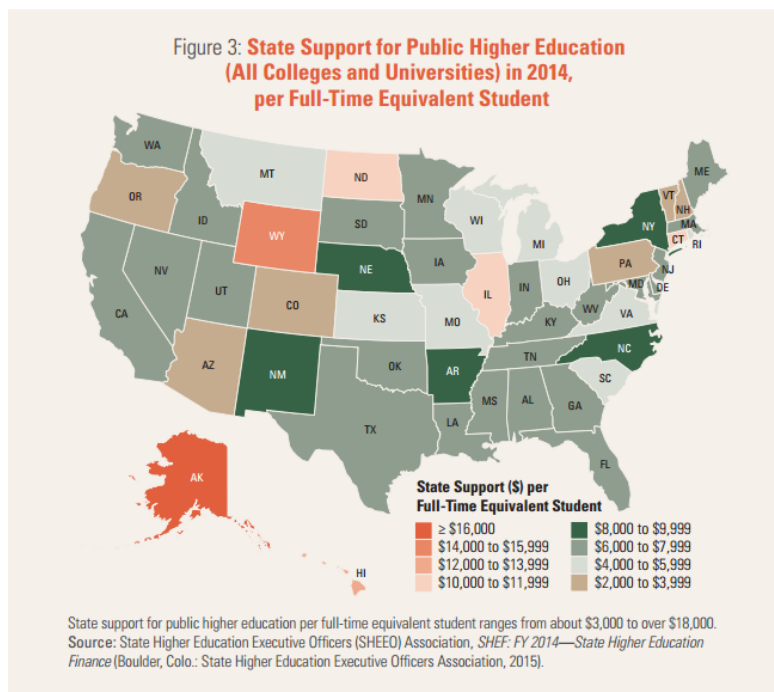
- The **Census Bureau** report, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014*, uses information collected in 2015 and earlier *Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplements*. From the report:
 - In 2014, the real median household income--\$53,657--was lower than in 2007, the year before the most recent recession. The official poverty rate was 14.8 % with 46.7 million people living in poverty.

Size of family unit	Weighted average thresholds	Related children under 18 years								
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual).....	12,071									
Under 65 years.....	12,316	12,316								
65 years and over.....	11,354	11,354								
Two people.....	15,379									
Householder under 65 years.....	15,934	15,853	16,317							
Householder 65 years and over.....	14,326	14,309	16,256							
Three people.....	18,850	18,518	19,055	19,073						
Four people.....	24,230	24,418	24,817	24,008	24,091					
Five people.....	28,695	29,447	29,875	28,960	28,252	27,820				
Six people.....	32,473	33,869	34,004	33,303	32,631	31,633	31,041			
Seven people.....	36,927	38,971	39,214	38,375	37,791	36,701	35,431	34,036		
Eight people.....	40,968	43,586	43,970	43,179	42,485	41,501	40,252	38,953	38,622	
Nine people or more.....	49,021	52,430	52,685	51,984	51,396	50,430	49,101	47,899	47,601	45,768

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014*, September 2015.
<http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-252.html>

- **The American Academy of Arts and Sciences** published, *Public Research Universities: Changes in State Funding*. The report looks at “state financing of higher education, describes the challenges that state governments face, and assesses the prospects for greater support in the future.” From page 6:



Source: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Public Research Universities: Changes in State Funding*, 2015. (<https://www.amacad.org/content/publications/publication.aspx?d=21942>)

The Workforce

The Workforce section of the Environmental Scan provides a summary of the current employment situation, with specific reports on the average hourly earnings, current and increasing minimum wage levels by state, current employment and salaries for correctional workers, and the “Ban the Box” initiative to reduce barriers for employing people who were formerly incarcerated.

- The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** provides a monthly report on the national employment situation. As of January 8, 2016:
 - The unemployment rate was unchanged at 5%,
 - The nonfarm payroll employment rose by 292,000 in December 2015,
 - Construction showed a strong job growth for the third consecutive month,
 - The average work week was 34.5 hours in December,
 - The average hourly earnings were \$25.24.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Situation- December 2015, January 8, 2016. (<http://www.bls.gov/ces/>)

- The **New York Times** reported that despite job growth, America workers with a college degree have only lukewarm wage growth. Many college graduates take jobs earning less than they expected. The exception is that graduates with STEM degrees or those who graduate from elite universities such as Harvard or University of California, Berkeley.

Source: New York Times, *Gap Widening as Top Workers Reap the Raises*, July 24, 2016. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/business/economy/salary-gap-widens-as-top-workers-in-specialized-fields-reap-rewards.html>)

- In January 2016, the **New York Times** reported that wages in December 2015 were 2.5% higher than a year earlier. This increases the possibility of inflation and could cause the Federal Reserve to raise rates. Chair Janet Yellen stated that the data on employment and wages would mean that the bank would raise rates more aggressively.

Source: New York Times, *Strong U.S. Wage Growth Boosts Chances of Fed Rate Hikes*, January 8, 2016. (<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2016/01/08/business/08reuters-usa-economy-fed-analysis.html>)

- The **National Conference of State Legislatures** provides a chart of current minimum wages and future wage increases by state. Key changes for 2016 include:

- 14 states begin 2016 with higher minimum wages,
- Colorado passed an 8 cent increase and South Dakota a 5 cent increase to the minimum wage,
- Maryland, Minnesota, and Washington, D.C. have scheduled increases for 2016.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, *State Minimum Wages/2016 Minimum Wage by State*, January 1, 2016.

(<http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wage-chart.aspx>)

- As of March 2015, the **Bureau of Labor Statistics** reports the average hourly and annual wages for corrections workers:

- Correctional officers and jailers was \$21.59 and \$44,910 respectively,
- Correctional first-line supervisors were \$29.71 and \$61,790 respectively,
- Probation officers was \$25.63 and \$53,360 respectively, and
- Employment of correctional officers is projected to grow 4% from 2014 to 2024, slower than the average for all occupations.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Employment and Wages*, March 25, 2015 for correctional officers and jailers (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes333012.htm>), for first-line supervisors of correctional officers (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes331011.htm>), for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211092.htm>), and expected growth for correctional officers (<http://www.bls.gov/oooh/protective-service/print/correctional-officers.htm>).

- The **U.S. Census Bureau** survey for *State and Local Employment and Payroll Data* shows that local governments employ 266,017 workers in corrections and state governments employ 451,703 workers in corrections. The total payroll dollars for local jurisdictions is \$1,161,086,262, and in states it is \$1,958,132,842.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Government Employment and Payroll*, March 2014.

(<http://www.census.gov/govs/apes/>)

- Employment for people formerly incarcerated continues to be a challenge despite the improved labor market. A recent movement to *Ban the Box* encourages the removal of barriers to employment, such as removing the question about an individual's conviction history from the job application. The **National Employment Law Project** provides tracking and resources on several *Ban the Box* initiatives. In December 2015, they reported that over 100 cities and counties have adopted policies that remove the conviction history question from job applications.

Source: National Employment Law Project, *Ban the Box: U.S. Cities, Counties, and states adopt fair hiring policies*, December 1, 2015. (<http://www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide/>)

Technology

Below are some examples of how technology is changing our social landscape, enhancing our ability to be connected, and affecting our privacy. The increasing use of body-worn camera systems is also highlighted.

- Each year editors of *MIT Technology Review* select the 10 most important technological milestones over the last 12 months. The 2015 list includes innovations such as:
 - Magic Leap. In 1-3 years there could be a device that makes virtual objects appear in real life. The technology could have a significant impact on the telecommunications, gaming, and film industries,
 - Car-to-Car Communication. This technology allows cars to broadcast data on their position, speed, and brake status to other vehicles within a few hundred meters. This advancement could help prevent collisions.
 - Project Loon. Google is developing technology to use balloons to deliver high-speed cellular internet coverage to people in areas that do not have access to the internet. Google representatives say these balloons could provide internet access to 4.3 billion people who do not currently have it.

Source: MIT Technology Review, *10 Breakthrough Technologies*, 2015.

(<http://www.technologyreview.com/lists/technologies/2015/>)

- Kim Zetter from *Wired* magazine, again looks at *The Biggest Security Threats We'll Face in 2016*. A few of the leading threats in 2016 include:
 - Extortion hacks similar to the one at the dating website AshleyMadison.com will increase. These hacks take place when attackers threaten to release sensitive information unless their demands are met. They can be hard to track, because if the victim pays the ransom the public never hears about them.
 - Data sabotage where digital data is manipulated. This could produce accounting errors or, if financial systems are hacked, stock prices could be forced to rise or fall dramatically.
 - An increase in stolen data from online purchases due to the new chip and PIN card that makes stealing data from a live transaction more difficult.

Source: WIRED, *The Biggest Security Threats We'll Face in 2016*, January 1, 2016.

(<http://www.wired.com/2016/01/the-biggest-security-threats-well-face-in-2016/>)

- The **World Economic Forum** releases reports annually on a broad range of topics. Several focus on technology and its global impact. Here are highlights from three of those reports:
 - *Global Information Technology Report 2015* assesses factors that allow countries to use information and communication technologies for increased competitiveness and well-being.
 - *Digital Media and Society: Implications in a Hyperconnected Era*. This report examines the impact digital media, entertainment, and information has on individual behavior and how these changes impact our personal, private, and professional lives. It goes on to make suggestions on how those can be cultivated to create positive change.
 - *Deep Shift Technology and Tipping Points and Societal Impact*. This survey report analyses respondents' views on 21 "tipping points" for technological shifts (p. 7):

Tipping Points Expected by 2025	%
10% of people wearing clothes connected to the internet	91.2
90% of people having unlimited and free (advertising-supported) storage	91
1 trillion sensors connected to the internet	89.2
The first robotic pharmacist in the US	86.5
10% of reading glasses connected to the internet	85.5
80% of people with a digital presence on the internet	84.4
The first 3D-printed car in production	84.1
The first government to replace its census with big data sources	82.9
The first implantable phone available commercially	81.7
90% of the population with regular access to the internet	78.8

Source: World Economic Forum Reports 2015.

(<http://reports.weforum.org/global-information-technology-report-2015/report-highlights/>)

(<http://www.weforum.org/reports/digital-media-and-society-implications-in-a-hyperconnected-era>)

(http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC15_Technological_Tipping_Points_report_2015.pdf)

- From the **Pew Research Center's** *Internet, Science & Technology* series:
 - *Mobile Messaging and Social Media 2015* – There are many new communication tools that serve social needs. These include Pinterest, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Kik. Facebook is still the most popular site with 62% of all American adults using it.
 - *Parents and Social Media* – 81 percent of parents who use social media respond to good news others shares. 74 percent of parents receive support from friends on social media.
 - *How Americans balance privacy concerns with sharing personal information: 5 key findings* – This report examines six different scenarios where Americans might face privacy questions.

Source: Pew Research Center, 2015-2016.

(<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/mobile-messaging-and-social-media-2015/>)

(<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/>)

(<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/14/key-findings-privacy-information-sharing/>)

- **TechRepublic:** *The Future of Electric Cars: Why the Battery Race will Define It and Musk is a Genius* – Will Electric Cars become Mainstream? “There are two main problems with electric cars today. They do not go far enough and they are dowdy.” To comply with stricter mileage standards there will have to be a lot of zero-emissions cars in your fleet. Consumers can expect there will be more desirable electric and hybrid model cars by 2025.

Source: TechRepublic, *The Future of Electric Cars: Why the battery race will define it and*

Musk is a genius, January 27, 2016 (<http://www.techrepublic.com/article/the-future-of-electric-cars-why-the-battery-race-will-define-it-and-musk-is-a-genius/>)

- **Camera systems** remain a popular topic in law enforcement. If law enforcement agencies decide to use these systems they need to take cost and storage of the data into account.
 - *Camera System Provides Panoramic View for Police*, the Palo Alto police department has installed five cameras in all 26 of their department’s vehicles. The cameras automatically record video as soon as the car is turned on. The footage can be used as evidence in court, and increases officer accountability. The system cost \$305,000.

Source: JUSTNET, *Camera System Provides Panoramic View for Police*, March/April 2015.

(https://justnet.org/InteractiveTechBeat/eTECHBEAT/eTechbeat_MarApr_2015/content/pdf/eTechbeat_MarApr_2015.pdf)

- As **drones** are more affordable and easier to use, they are becoming an increasingly hot topic in corrections as either a new security device or a new way to smuggle contraband into facilities. In fact they are so trendy the [Federal Bureau of Prisons created a Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) to explore solutions for protection from unmanned air vehicles.
 - This article, *Playing Defense against the Drones: We've Managed to Create Armies of Flying Robots. Can We Control Them?*, in **The Atlantic Monthly** gives a great overview of many of the issues around drones.

Source: The Atlantic Monthly, *Playing Defense Against the Drones: We've managed to create armies of flying robots. Can we control them?*, November 2015.

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/11/playing-defense-against-the-drones/407851/>)

- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or drones can be used by law enforcement to fight crime, **Policeone.com** reported in 2015. They list five situations where drones can aid fighting crime:
 - Active Shooters,
 - Crime and Traffic Accident Scene Analysis,
 - Surveillance,
 - Crowd Monitoring,
 - Bomb Inspection.

Source: Policeone.com, 5 ways drones can help cops fight crime, September 17, 2015.

(<https://www.policeone.com/police-products/Police-Drones/articles/9502450-5-ways-drones-can-help-cops-fight-crime/>)

- *The Journal-News* reported in March 2015 that the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has stopped testing drones as a means to monitor the perimeters of its prisons. The cameras available on drones are not strong enough to meet their security needs.

Source: The Journal-News, State no longer testing security drones at local prison sites, March 22, 2015.

(<http://www.journal-news.com/news/news/state-no-longer-testing-security-drones-at-local-p/nkb8y/>)

- An article from August 2015 in ***The Columbus Dispatch***, *Drone drops drugs, tobacco in Mansfield prison yard, spurs fight*, reported that a fight in the prison yard was caused by a package dropped by a drone. The package contained tobacco, marijuana, and heroin. Prison officials did not know a drone had flown over the area until they reviewed security footage of the fight.

Source: The Columbus Dispatch, *Drone drops drugs, tobacco in Mansfield prison yard, spurs fight*, August 5, 2015. (<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/08/04/drone-drops-drugs-in-Ohio-prison-yard.html>)

- **Correctionsonone.com** reported in, *'DroneShield' helps prisons know what's coming: DroneShield sends alerts via email or SMS to a 24/7 monitoring service that works with police and legal response teams*, about a new technology that can detect the presence of drones from up to 150 yards away.

Source: Correctionsonone.com, *'DroneShield' helps prisons know what's coming: DroneShield sends alerts via email or SMS to a 24/7 monitoring service that works with police and legal response teams*, February 20, 2015. (<http://www.correctionsonone.com/drones/articles/8350252>)

Public Opinion

According to a recent Gallup poll, crime continues to be an issue of lower importance to the public. Below are other public opinion polls from Gallup. Topics include marijuana legalization, diverging views on race, and privacy and security.

- **Gallup** Poll reported *More Americans Say Crime is Rising in the U.S.* In fact, 7 in 10 Americans think crime has increased since 2014. Government data on the actual crime rates will not be released until 2017. Americans' perceptions are not always correct as statistics show that violent crime has decreased.

*Perceptions of Increased Crime in the U.S.,
by Subgroup*

	2014	2015	Change (pct. pts.)
Men	55	67	+12
Women	71	73	+2
East	60	69	+9
Midwest	65	76	+11
South	70	71	+1
West	53	64	+11
Conservative	68	80	+12
Moderate	66	71	+5
Liberal	47	57	+10
Republican	72	79	+7
Independent	58	69	+11
Democrat	57	65	+8
City	63	68	+5
Suburb	54	69	+15
Town/Rural	68	75	+7
Victim of a crime	65	71	+6
Not a victim of a crime	62	70	+8

October 7-11, 2015

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The perception of the increase in crime varies by subgroup

Source: GALLUP, *More Americans Say Crime is Rising in the U.S.*,
October 2015.

http://www.gallup.com/poll/186308/americans-say-crimerising.aspx?g_source=crime&g_medium=search&g_campaign=titles

- Another **Gallup** poll finds that the number of Americans that think racism is the most important U.S. problem has increased to 9 percent. This increase comes after high-profile incidents of police brutality towards blacks around the country.

Most Important Problems Facing the U.S.

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today? (open-ended)

Problem	June 2-7, 2015	July 8-12, 2015
	%	%
Economy in general	13	13
Dissatisfaction with government/Congress	14	13
Race relations/Racism	3	9
Immigration/Illegal aliens	6	7
Unemployment/Jobs	9	6
Ethics/moral/religious/family decline; Dishonesty	5	6
Federal budget deficit/Federal debt	3	5
Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness	5	4
Crime/Violence	3	4
Education	5	4
Healthcare	6	4
Gap between rich and poor	4	3
Judicial system/Courts/Laws	1	3
Terrorism	5	3
Lack of respect for each other	2	3
Environment/Pollution	3	3
Foreign policy/Foreign aid/Focus overseas	3	3

Responses listed by at least 3% of Americans are shown

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Source: Gallup, Racism Edges Up Again as Most Important U.S. Problem, July, 2015.

(http://www.gallup.com/poll/184193/racism-edges-again-%20important%20problem.aspx?g_source=race&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles)

- Support for the legalization of marijuana continues to rise according to a **Gallup** poll in October 2015. A majority favors legal marijuana for the third year in a row. Higher levels of support come from younger Americans.

Support for Legalizing the Use of Marijuana, by Age Group, 1969-2015, Selected Polls

	1969	1985	2000/2001	2015
	%	%	%	%
National adults	12	23	33	58
18 to 34 years old	20	32	44	71
35 to 49 years old	11	22	34	64
50 to 64 years old	6	16	30	58
65+ years old	4	13	17	35

Note: Analysis uses combined data from 2000 and 2001 because 2000 survey asked the question of a half-sample of respondents

GALLUP

Source: Gallup, *In U.S., 58% Back Legal Marijuana Use*, October 21, 2015.

(http://www.gallup.com/poll/186260/back-legal-marijuana.aspx?source=social%20issues&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles)

- In a **New York Times/CBS News** poll, 63 percent of American Catholics have a positive view of Pope Francis. 79 percent of Catholics approve of the direction he is taking the church.

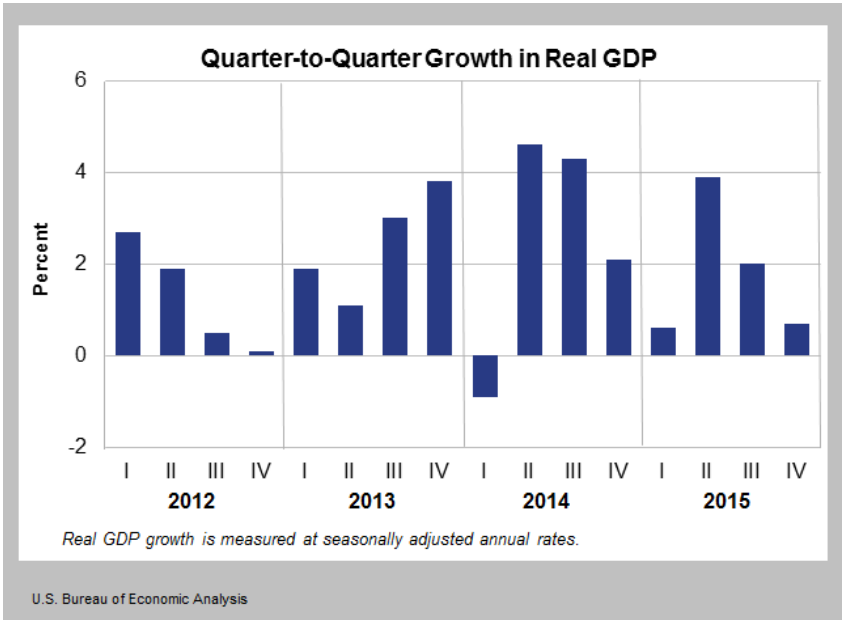
Source: CBS News.com, *Majority of U.S. Catholics positive about Church*, September 20, 2015.

(<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-poll-majority-of-u-s-catholics-positive-about-church/>) not sure I'd leave in

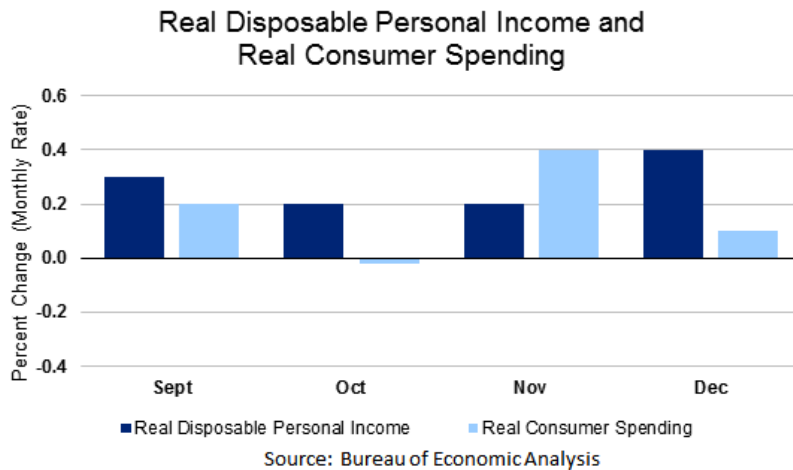
The Economy and Government Spending

This section takes a look at trends in federal and state economies, as well as income trends at the county level.

- The **Bureau of Economic Analysis** provides a variety of data sources on the economy. Examples are listed below:
 - The *GDP and the Economy* report provides key economic statistics on gross domestic product (GDP) and real disposable personal income. Real GDP increased 0.7 percent in the fourth quarter after increasing 2.0 percent in the third quarter of 2015. For 2015, the real GDP increased 2.4 percent.



- Personal Income decelerated in the fourth quarter. The slowdown is reflected in a slowdown in services-producing industries as well as goods-producing industries.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, *GDP and the Economy*, February 2016.
(<http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/glance.htm>)

- Looking out 10 years, the **Congressional Budget Office (CBO)** provides an update on the nation's budget and economy in its annual report, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2016 to 2026*. The CBO estimates that the federal budget deficit in 2016 will be \$544 billion. That raises the debt to 76 percent of the GDP.

Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2015 to 2025*, January 25, 2016 (<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/51129>)

- In March of 2015, the **CBO** released the report, *Public Spending on Transportation and Water Infrastructure, 1956 to 2014*. The report has information on spending for highways, mass transit and rail, aviation, water transportation, water resources, and water utilities. The share of GDP that federal, state, and local governments spend on transportation and water infrastructure has remained steady at around 2.4 percent for the past three decades.

Source, Congressional Budget Office, March 2, 2015.
(<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/49910>)

- The **Urban Institute** has a quarterly publication that examines state economies. The interactive map provides state-level charts on nonfarm payroll employment, public sector employment, unemployment rate, average weekly earnings, coincident index, and housing price index.

Source: Urban Institute, *State economic data and maps*, March 2015.

(<http://www.ncsl.org/research/fiscal-policy/fy-2016-budget-status.aspx>)

- This annual report of the **Council of State Governments** provides a list of the top five issues that state legislatures will face in areas such as education, energy and environmental policy, fiscal and economic policy, health, and workforce development. From the 2016 report, “For the last few years, states on the whole have seen a slow and steady increase in revenues and in the coming year, many state leaders will have a little bit more breathing room when making fiscal decisions. However, the most pressing questions facing policymakers likely will center on allocating their still limited resources to fund programs such as Medicaid and education, in the midst of the fiscal uncertainty that accompanies a big election year and the unpredictable federal appropriations process.” The five top fiscal and economic policy issues include:

1. Modest Revenue Growth, Strategic Decisions,
2. Workforce Development, Wages and Innovations,
3. Public Pensions,
4. Federal Instability in the appropriations process, and
5. Health Care.

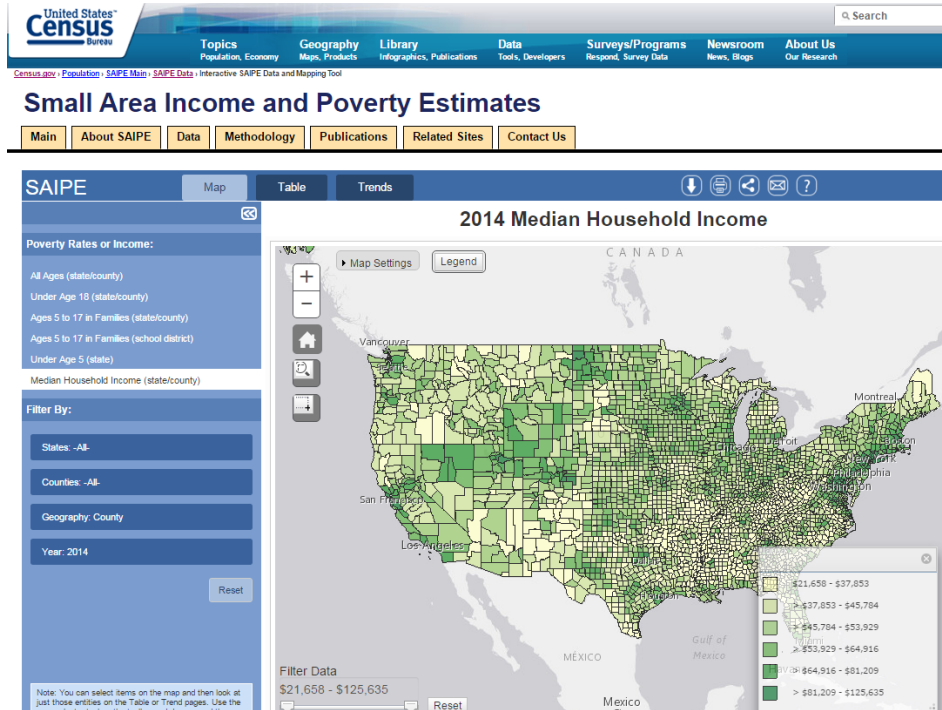
Source: The Council of State Governments, *CSG Policy Staff Outlines Top Issues for 2016*, January 4, 2016. (<http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/csg-policy-staff-outlines-top-issues-2016>)

- The **PEW Charitable Trusts** analysis of the fiscal conditions of the state governments shows there is only partial recovery among all the states. Almost half of all states collect less tax revenue than in the pre-recession era with Alaska being furthest from its peak, and despite widespread job growth no state had fully recovered its labor pool by mid-2015. Personal income has experienced growth even though it is uneven.

Source: PEW, *Insights From Fiscal 50's Key Measures of State Fiscal Health*, February 3, 2016.

(<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/analysis/2015/11/11/insights-from-fiscal-50s-key-measures-of-state-fiscal-health>)

- The **United States Census Bureau** has data on the income and poverty rate in an interactive map with table and trends. This useful tool can be found on the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates page.

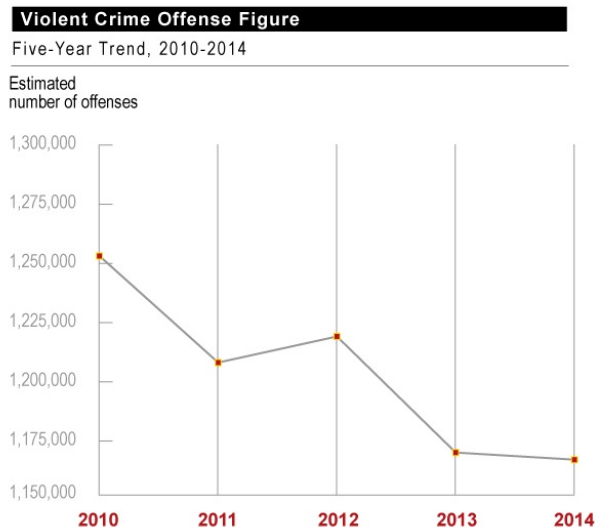


Source: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, data 2014.
http://www.census.gov/did/www/saie/data/interactive/saie.html?s_appName=saie&s_measures=mhi_snc&menu=map_proxy&map_yearSelector=2014&map_geoSelector=mhi_c)

Criminal Justice Trends

In 2014, both the number of violent and property crimes decreased slightly. In addition to statistics on crime rates, this section includes reports on federal and state arrests and imprisonment, sexual victimization, and the top crime news stories from 2015.

- This annual report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation provides a summary of reported crimes in the United States for 2014. From the report, “the estimated number of violent crimes in 2014 decreased .2 percent when compared with 2013 data. And the estimated number of property crimes decreased 4.3 percent. “There were an estimated 1,165,383 violent crimes reported to law enforcement last year, along with an estimated 8,277,829 property crimes. “When considering 5- and 10-year trends, the 2014 estimated violent crime total was 6.9 percent below the 2010 level and 16.2 percent below the 2005 level.”



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *2014 Crime in the United States, September 28, 2015.*

(<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2015/september/latest-crime-stats-released/latest-crime-stats-released>)

- **PEW** reported that crime rates have decreased by half from their high in 1991. In fact, crime rates are at similar levels to those from the 1960s. The national imprisonment rate is also down.



Source: PEW, *Imprisonment and Crime Rates Fell in 30 States Over 5 Years*, September 2015. (<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2015/imprisonment-crime-rates-fell-in-30-states-over-five-years>)

- **Penal Reform International** released their first of an annual series, *Global Prison Trends 2015*. The report aims to describe global penal trends and then make wider policy recommendations.

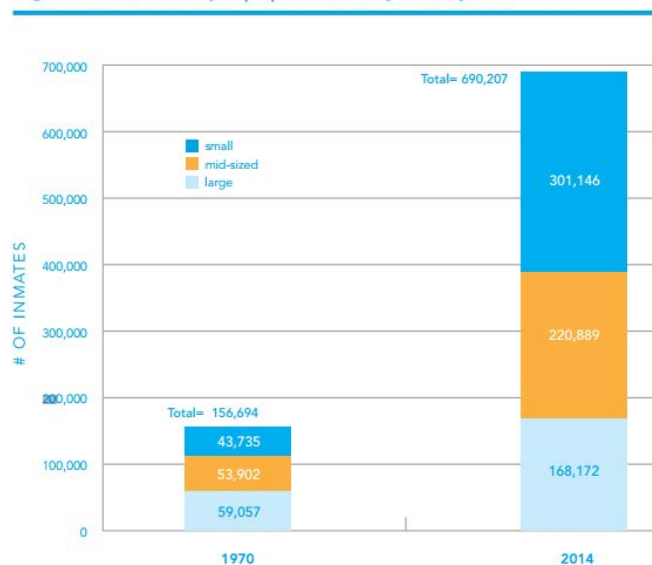
Some global trends PRI identify are:

- The world prison population has increased by 10 percent since 2010,
- The use of pre-trial detention is a global issue,
- The prison population rate including both men and women is 144 per 100,000, and
- UN data show that the median number of prison staff in Canada and the United States is 115 per 100,000.

Source: Penal Reform International, *Global Prison Trends 2015*, 2015. (<http://www.penalreform.org/resource/global-prison-trends-2015/>)

- *In Our Own Backyard: Confronting Growth and Disparities in American Jails*, **VERA** developed a tool that maps incarceration rates for every county in the United States that has a local jail. The tool uses data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and demographic data from the U.S. Census. The data show a significant growth in the jail population since 1970.

Figure 1: Growth in jail populations, by county size



Source: Vera Institute of Justice analysis of the Bureau of Justice Statistics Census of Jails and Annual Survey of Jails. See "The Incarceration Trends Tool" on page 6 for additional detail.

Notes: Jail population excludes inmates held for federal authorities. County sizes by residents in 2014: large counties = >1 million residents; mid-sized counties = 250,000 to 1 million residents; and small counties = < 250,000 residents.

Source: VERA, December 2015. (<http://vera.org/pubs/incarceration-trends-in-our-own-backyard>)

- Highlights from the **Bureau of Justice Statistics** Federal Justice Statistics Program(FJSP) report *Drug Offenders in Federal Prisons; Estimates of Characteristics Based on Linked Data* (October 2015)show:
 - The number of drug offenders in federal prisons grew 63 percent from 1998 to 2012;
 - 39 percent of drug offenders are African American,
 - 35 percent had no prior imprisonment although criminal history varied by drug type, and
 - The average prison sentence for a drug offense was 11.3 years.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Drug Offenders In Federal Prisons: Estimates Of Characteristics Based On Linked Data*, October 27, 2015. (<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5436>)

and issues of the year. This year the list includes:

- Black Lives Matter,
- Technology used to record the actions of law enforcement, either as officers with body-worn cameras or citizens using cellphone cameras,
- Sentencing reform to reduce mass incarceration,
- Jails,
- The Charleston Massacre,
- President Obama's focus on criminal justice,
- Left and Right working together to overhaul corrections and sentencing,
- Rise of heroin addiction,
- Rethinking capital punishment, and
- Concerns about a rise in homicide across the country.

Source: The Crime Report, *Black Lives Matter is Top News Story of 2015*, December 9, 2015
(<http://www.thecrimereport.org/news/inside-criminal-justice/2015-12-black-lives-matter-is-top-news-story-of-2015>)

Corrections Populations and Trends

The corrections population decreased by 0.8 percent for 2014, resulting in the lowest observed U.S. population since 2003. Overall, about one in 36 adults in the U.S. were under some form of correctional supervision in 2014, the lowest rate since 1996.

- According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics report, *Correctional Populations in the United States*, at the end 2014, the adult correctional population in the U.S. was estimated at 6.8 million. This number is down by about 52,200 offenders. Table 1 from the **BJS** report shows the correctional population by correctional status.

TABLE 1
Estimated number of persons supervised by U.S. adult correctional systems, by correctional status, 2000, 2005–2010, and 2013–2014

Year	Total correctional population ^a	Community supervision		Incarcerated ^b			
		Total ^{a,c}	Probation	Parole	Total ^{a,d}	Local jail	Prison
2000	6,467,800	4,564,900	3,839,400	725,500	1,945,400	621,100	1,394,200
2005	7,055,600	4,946,600	4,162,300	784,400	2,200,400	747,500	1,525,900
2006	7,199,700	5,035,000	4,236,800	798,200	2,256,600	765,800	1,568,700
2007	7,339,600	5,119,000	4,293,000	826,100	2,296,400	780,200	1,596,800
2008	7,313,600	5,094,400	4,270,100	828,200	2,310,300	785,500	1,608,300
2009	7,235,200	5,015,900	4,196,200	824,100	2,297,700	767,400	1,615,500
2010	7,086,500	4,886,000	4,053,600	840,700	2,279,100	748,700	1,613,800
2013	6,903,200	4,753,400	3,910,600	855,200	2,222,500	731,200	1,577,000
2014	6,851,000	4,708,100	3,864,100	856,900	2,224,400	744,600	1,561,500
Average annual percent change, 2007–2014	-1.0%	-1.2%	-1.5%	0.5%	-0.5%	-0.7%	-0.3%
Percent change, 2013–2014	-0.8%	-1.0%	-1.2%	0.2%	0.1%	1.8%	-1.0%

Note: Estimates were rounded to the nearest 100 and may not be comparable to previously published BJS reports due to updated information or rounding. Counts include estimates for nonresponding jurisdictions. All probation, parole, and prison counts are for December 31; jail counts are for the last weekday in June. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and adjustments made to account for offenders with multiple correctional statuses. See *Methodology*.

^aTotal was adjusted to account for offenders with multiple correctional statuses. See *Methodology*.

^bIncludes inmates under the jurisdiction of state or federal prisons or held in local jails.

^cIncludes some offenders held in a prison or local jail but who remained under the jurisdiction of a probation or parole agency.

^dMay differ from estimates reported elsewhere in this report. See *Terms and definitions*.

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Probation Survey, Annual Parole Survey, Annual Survey of Jails, Census of Jail Inmates, and National Prisoner Statistics program, 2000, 2005–2010, and 2013–2014.

- In 2014 most of the jurisdictions in the U.S. had more than half of their correctional population supervised in the community either on probation or parole. Table 5 below from the **BJS** report compares the numbers from 2000 to 2007 and 2007 to 2014.

TABLE 5
Change in the estimated number of persons supervised by U.S. adult correctional systems, 2000–2007 and 2007–2014

Correctional populations	2000–2007		2007–2014	
	Change in population ^a	Percent of total change ^a	Change in population ^a	Percent of total change ^a
Total change ^b	871,900	100%	-488,600	100%
Probation	453,600	52.0	-428,800	87.8
Prison	202,600	23.2	-35,300	7.2
Local jail	159,000	18.2	-35,600	7.3
Parole	100,600	11.5	30,800	-6.3
Offenders with multiple correctional statuses ^c	43,900	:	19,700	:

Note: Estimates were rounded to the nearest 100 and include adjustments for nonresponding jurisdictions. See *Methodology*.

^a: Not calculated.

^bDetail may not sum to total due to adjustments to exclude offenders with multiple correctional statuses from the total to avoid double counting. See table 6 and *Methodology*.

^cIncludes the change in the number of offenders with multiple correctional statuses. See table 6 and *Methodology*.

^dSome probationers and parolees on December 31 were held in a prison or local jail but still remained under the jurisdiction of a probation or parole agency, and some parolees were also on probation. Some prisoners were held in a local jail on December 31. These offenders were excluded from the total correctional population prior to calculating change to avoid double counting. See table 6 and *Methodology*.

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Probation Survey, Annual Parole Survey, Annual Survey of Jails, and National Prisoner Statistics program, 2000–2014.

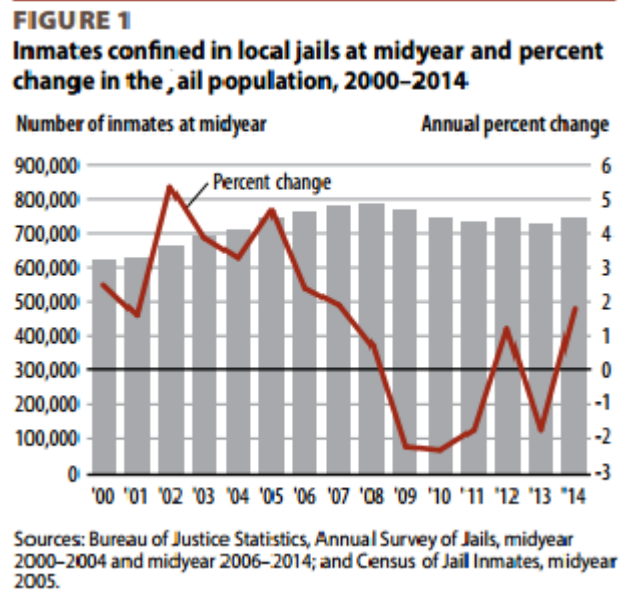
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2014*, Revised January 21, 2016. (<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5519>)

- **The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA)** releases an annual report on critical issues facing corrections. This report, *ASCA 2015 Top Four Critical Issues Report*, lists the top issues identified by agency heads.
 1. Care of the Mentally Ill,
 2. Population Increase Issues,
 3. Staff Issues-Vacancy Rates, Wellness, Recruitment and Retention, Inexperienced Officers, Shortages, Attrition,
 4. Restrictive Housing-Administrative Segregation.

Source: Association of State Correctional Administrators, *ASCA 2015 Top Four Critical Issues Report*, 2015 (<http://www.asca.net/articles/3628>)

Jail Overview

- The **BJS** annual report provides estimates of changes to the jail inmate population. At mid-year 2014 the report shows that the jail incarceration rate has decreased since its peak in 2007. Midyear 2014 the rate was 234 per 100,000.



More highlights from the report:

- White inmates account for 47 percent of total jail population,
- 0.6 percent or 4,200 of those held in local jails are 17 or younger,
- The increase in the jail population since 2000 is largely due to the increase in the unconvicted population, and
- Local jails admitted about 11.4 million people from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

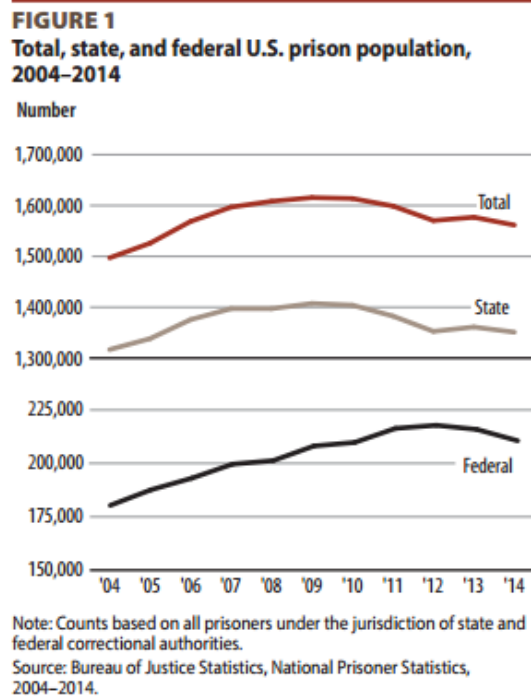
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Jail Inmates At Midyear 2014*, June 2015, (<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5299>)

- Highlights from the **BJS** report *Jails in Indian Country, 2014*:
 - At midyear 2014, Indian country jails housed a total of 2,380 inmates in 79 Indian country jails. That is a 4 percent increase from 2013.
 - The juvenile population has declined since 2000 from 16 to 8 percent in 2014.
 - There has been a decline in inmates held for alcohol and drug offenses.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Jails in Indian Country, 2014*, October 2015. (<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5414>)

Prison Overview

- During 2013, the number of prisoners under the jurisdiction of state and federal correctional authorities increased for the first time since 2009. The report, *Prisoners In 2014*, shows that the number of prisoners held in state and federal facilities decreased by 1 percent.



Highlights from the **BJS** report:

- The BOP houses 19 percent of their prisoners in private prisons,
- The number of women in prison increased 2 percent in 2014 with 59 percent of the women serving time for drug offenses, and
- 6 percent of black males in the U.S. between the ages of 30-38 were in prison.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 2014*, September 2015. (<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5387>)

Probation and Parole Overview

- Again from **BJ**S, *Probation And Parole In The United States, 2014*, presents data on adult offenders under community supervision:

Probation Highlights

- The adult probation population declined by 46,500 offenders or down by 1.2 percent, and
- Entries onto probation decreased by 1.3 percent and exits from probation by almost 1 percent.

Parole Highlights

- The adult parole population increased by about 2 percent to an estimated 856,900 offenders at the end of 2014,
- Both parole entries and exits decreased about 1.5 percent, and
- The reincarceration rate among parolees at risk of violating their conditions of supervision remained stable again in 2014 at about 9 percent.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2014*, November 2015 (<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5415>)

Mass Incarceration

The issue of mass incarceration is something that those who work in the criminal justice field have been aware of for many years. The number of inmates has been steadily increasing since the 1980s. Much of the increase can be attributed to tougher drug laws, mandatory sentencing, and “three strikes and you are out” laws. The United States now has the second highest incarceration rate in the world at 698 per 100,000. That amounts to 2.3 million people in prisons or jails or 25 percent of the world’s prisoners. The U.S. spends \$80 billion a year running its correctional facilities. The following resources focus on this issue and the initiatives and policies proposed to address it.

- President Obama’s recent focus on criminal justice reform has brought the implications of mass incarceration to the forefront. The President has given several speeches in 2015 outlining some of the consequences of the U.S.’s high incarceration rate and ways this administration is addressing them.
 - The Fair Sentencing Act 2010, which reduces the disparity in the mandatory minimum sentences between powder cocaine and crack cocaine and increases the fines for drug traffickers, and the 2014 Amendments to Sentencing Guidelines.
 - Justice Reinvestment which is a data-driven approach to reduce corrections and criminal justice spending and reinvesting the savings into programs to reduce recidivism.
 - Smart Probation Strategies that employ consistent and swift sanctions for probation violations.
 - Rehabilitation and Reintegration policies include grants from the Department of Education that support education and reentry success for the formally incarcerated, new guidance on HUD housing policies, modifying federal hiring rules to delay inquiries into criminal histories (Ban the Box), establishing the National Clean Slate Clearing house to help expunge criminal records, permanent supportive housing for the reentry population to address homelessness and recidivism.

Source: Whitehouse.gov

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/07/15/president-obama-our-criminal-justice-system-isnt-smart-it-should-be>)

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/alternatives-to-incarceration>)

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/08/03/president-obama-signs-fair-sentencing-act>)

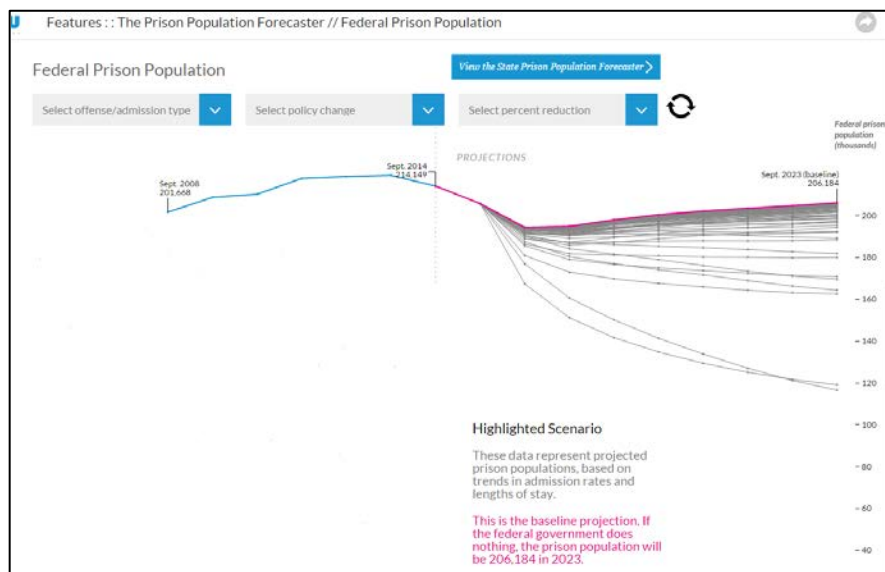
(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/criminal-justice-reform>)

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/02/fact-sheet-president-obama-announces-new-actions-promote-rehabilitation>)

- **Urban Institute** developed *The Prison Population Forecaster* using federal statistics from the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) and the Bureau of Prisons. This interactive tool can forecast population trends and project the impact of different policy decisions on the size of state and federal prisons.

Some examples:

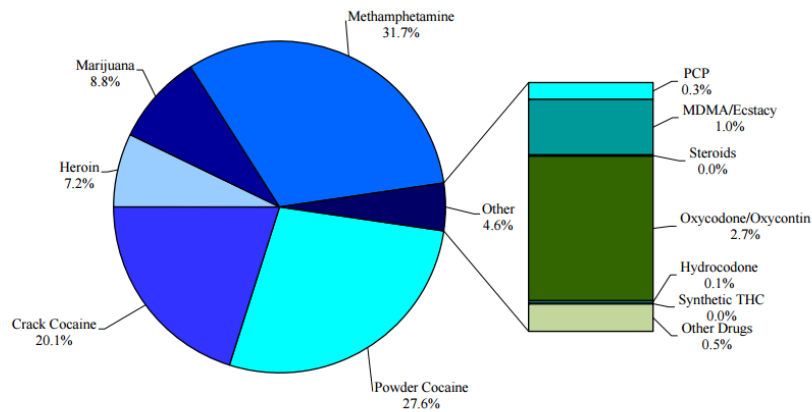
- If drug offenses are reduced by 15 percent, the state prison population would be 2 percent lower by December 2021, and
- In the federal prison system 49 percent of the inmates' primary offense is drug related. Cutting the length of stay for these offenses by half could lead to an 18 percent reduction in the prison population by 2023.



Source: Urban Institute, *The Prison Population Forecaster // Federal or State Prison Population*, 2015. (<http://webapp.urban.org/reducing-mass-incarceration/>)

- *The U.S. Sentencing Commission 2014 Drug Guidelines Amendment Retroactivity Data Report* shares the data on the motions to reduce the sentences pursuant to Amendment 782. It reflects all motions decided from September 30, 2015 to November 30, 2015. The Commission reviewed 17,446 applicants; 13,187 will be released in the coming months.

Table 2
DISTRIBUTION OF DRUG TYPE OF OFFENDERS WHO RECEIVED SENTENCE REDUCTION DUE TO APPLICATION OF RETROACTIVE DRUG GUIDELINES AMENDMENT¹



¹ Of the 21,003 cases in which the court granted a motion for a sentence reduction due to retroactive application of Amendment 782, information on drug type was missing in 350 cases.

SOURCE: U.S. Sentencing Commission, Amendment 782 Datafile.

Source: United States Sentencing Commission, *The U.S. Sentencing Commission 2014 Drug Guidelines Amendment Retroactivity Data Report*, December 2015.

(<http://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/retroactivity-analyses/drug-guidelines-amendment/20151203-drug-amendment-report.pdf>)

- Some highlights from the *Frequently Asked Questions: Retroactive Application of the 2014 Drug Guidelines Amendment*:
 - The Commission estimates that 46,000 offenders are eligible for a reduction in their current sentence,
 - No one will automatically receive a sentence reduction,
 - Sentences could be reduced by an average of 18.8 percent for eligible offenders, and
 - Offenders are eligible for release from all over the country with higher concentrations of eligible offenders coming from Western Texas, Southern Texas, Puerto Rico, Eastern Texas, Middle Florida, and Northern Texas.

Source: United States Sentencing Commission, Frequently Asked Questions: Retroactive Application of the 2014 Drug Guidelines Amendment. (<http://www.ussc.gov/amendment-process/materials-2014-drug-guidelines-amendment>)

- In October, **The Marshall Project** analyzed the profiles of the 6,000 federal prisoners being released due to reductions in their sentences based on motions filed under the Drug Guidelines Amendment 2014.
 - 24 percent are White, 38 percent are Hispanic, 34 percent are African-American,
 - 7 percent are women,
 - More than half of those being released come from the South,
 - Almost a quarter of the prisoners being released are not U.S. citizens, and
 - The average length of the sentence served will be nine years.

Source: The Marshall Project, *Meet the Federal Prisoners About to be Released: A profile of the 6,000*, October 9, 2015.

(<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/10/09/meet-the-federal-prisoners-about-to-be-released#>)

- The *Reverse Mass Incarceration Act* is a proposal out of the **Brennan Center for Justice** to reduce incarceration in the United States. The Act proposes:
 - Federal grant money to incentivize states to reduce imprisonment,
 - A clear way of determining how much money each states receives,
 - A requirement that money be used on evidence-based programs to reduce crime and incarceration, and
 - A requirement for states to reduce their prison population by 7 percent over three years while maintaining public safety.

Source: Lauren-Brooke Eisen and Inimai M. Chettiar, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, *The Reverse Mass Incarceration Act*, October 12, 2015.

(<https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/reverse-mass-incarceration-act>)

- **The Crime Report** summarized the plan of Professor Michael Tonry from the University of Minnesota to reduce incarceration in *A 10-step Blueprint to End Mass Incarceration*. Tonry's proposal focuses on changes to sentencing, each state having parole guidelines, and incentives for states to reduce their incarceration rates.

Source: The Crime Report, *A 10-step Blueprint to End Mass Incarceration*, January 9, 2015.

(<http://www.thecrimereport.org/news/inside-criminal-justice/2015-01-a-10-step-blueprint-to-end-mass-incarceration>)

- Does decreasing the length of sentences increase the crime rate as the public and many law makers fear? **The Pew Charitable Trusts** researched this question. They examined crime trends in 23 states that have raised the felony thresholds for the value of stolen goods. They found raising the felony threshold had no impact on property crime rates.

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Effects of Changing State Theft Penalties, February 23, 2016. (<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2016/02/the-effects-of-changing-state-theft-penalties>)