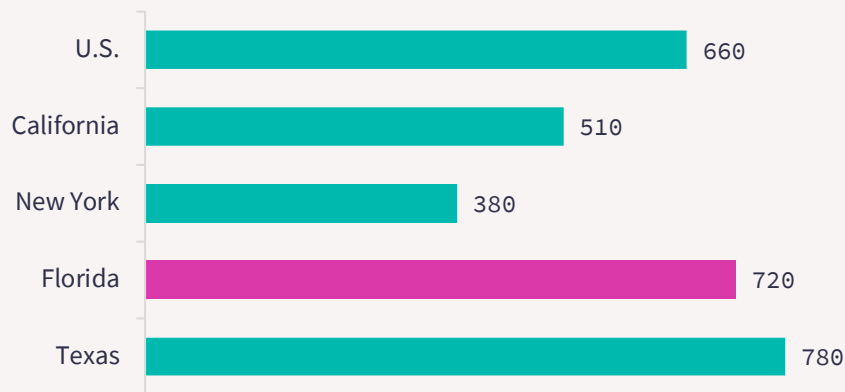


## The Rate of Incarceration in Florida

*Florida has one of the highest incarceration rates in the nation. While the state's incarceration rate has decreased since 2014, it still remains well above the national average. The number of people confined in prison and the fast growth rate of people sent to prison will have a significant social and economic impact on the state.*

Florida has a high percentage of residents who are incarcerated. Florida's incarceration rate of 720 persons per 100,000 residents is higher than the national average of 660, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics,<sup>1</sup> although it has decreased by 25 percent since 2014. Notably, this rate has increased by almost 50 percent during an 11-year period; in 2005, the state had an incarceration rate of 492 inmates per 100,000 residents.<sup>2</sup>

INCARCERATION RATE IN THE U.S. AND SELECTED STATES  
Rate per 100,000 residents, 2016



Source: Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Accessed via: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf> See Appendix Table 1.

Florida's high rate of incarceration will have tremendous social and economic costs to the state. Incarceration has lasting negative effects on individuals, families and communities.<sup>3</sup> When the breadwinner of a household is incarcerated, household income decreases and the chance of children and families living in poverty is very high.<sup>4</sup> Incarceration of a family member hurts children's educational success. Children of an incarcerated parent are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than their peers.<sup>5</sup>

People with criminal records face serious obstacles in finding stable and adequate employment.<sup>6</sup> Individuals who have been convicted and incarcerated have much less potential to earn a decent income that meets the needs of their families and they are less likely to be able to get ahead in their careers.<sup>7</sup>

The high level of incarceration also has a tremendous strain on the state's budget. Florida has one of the largest populations of elderly inmates<sup>8</sup> and mentally ill and drug addicted individuals in its prisons.<sup>9</sup> This also exposes the state to higher costs as the needs of mentally ill and addicted inmates far exceeds the non-mentally ill inmates. For example, for specialty institutions where elderly inmates are commonly housed, it costs the state on average \$17 a day to provide health services as opposed to the statewide average of \$12.<sup>10</sup> The high cost of housing prisoners, and elderly and aging inmates in particular, can drive the state to make difficult fiscal choices.

This can result in budget cuts from different programs to finance the growing needs of the incarcerated population.

Florida's incarceration rate is primarily driven by the high number of offenders sent to prison and the length of time served by inmates in prison.<sup>11</sup> Florida can ensure the safety of its residents by reforming the policies that have contributed to the high growth rate of its prison population. By limiting the share of offenders sent to prison through diversion programs and cutting the length of time spent in prison — getting rid of statutory time served requirements like the 85 percent rule — Florida can reduce the attendant economic and social costs to the state and its families.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaeble, Danielle and Mary Cowhig. "Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016." U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs (Bureau of Justice Statistics), April 2018. Accessed via: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, Paige M. and Allen J. Beck. "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2005." Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006. Accessed via: [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pjim05.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pjim05.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Kearney, Melissa S. and et al. "Ten Economic Facts about Crime and incarceration in the United States." Brookings Institution, 2014. Accessed via: [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2014/05/01-crime-facts/v8\\_thp\\_10crimefacts.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2014/05/01-crime-facts/v8_thp_10crimefacts.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Pew Charitable Trusts. "Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility." 2010. Accessed via: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs\\_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Mitchel, Michael and Michael Leachman. "Changing Priorities: State Criminal Justice Reform and Investments in Education. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2014. Accessed via: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/changing-priorities-state-criminal-justice-reforms-and-investments-in-education>

<sup>7</sup> See at Supra note 4

<sup>8</sup> Florida Department of Corrections. "2016-2017 Annual Report." Accessed via: [http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1617/FDC\\_AR2016-17.pdf](http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1617/FDC_AR2016-17.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Torrey, E.Fuller and et al. "More Mentally Ill Persons Are In Jails and Prisons Than Hospitals: A Survey of the States." Treatment Advocacy Center and National Sheriffs' Association, 2010. Accessed via: [http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/final\\_jails\\_v\\_hospitals\\_study.pdf](http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/final_jails_v_hospitals_study.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> See at Supra note 8

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<sup>11</sup> The Pew Charitable Trusts. “Time Served: The high Cost, Low Return of Longer Prison Terms.” 2012. Accessed via: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/sentencing\\_and\\_corrections/prison-timeservedpdf.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/sentencing_and_corrections/prison-timeservedpdf.pdf)