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## Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

# Women in Jail 1989

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Women in local jails increased in number from 15,769 in 1983 to 37,383 in 1989. Almost half of this increase resulted from more women being held for drug violations. In 1989 more than 1 in 3 female inmates were in jail for a drug offense, up from 1 in 8 in 1983. Among all convicted female inmates, nearly two-fifths reported that they had committed their offense under the influence of drugs. A quarter reported being under the influence of cocaine or crack.

Using information from interviews of a representative sample of women in local jails throughout the United States, this report describes their personal backgrounds, current offenses or charges, criminal histories, prior drug and alcohol use, and past physical or sexual abuse. For women convicted of violent offenses, the characteristics of their victims are also described.

The 1989 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, the primary source of this study, collected data from interviews in a nationally representative sample of 5,675 inmates in 424 jails. Data from a similar survey conducted in 1983 permit an overview of recent changes.

#### Other findings include:

- More than half of convicted female inmates had used drugs in the month prior to the current offense. Approximately 40% had used drugs daily.
- The percentage of female inmates who had used cocaine or crack in the month before their current offense more than doubled from 15% in 1983 to 39% in 1989.

This Special Report provides detailed information on the characteristics and backgrounds of women held in locally operated jails across the Nation. The data came from interviews of a representative sample of inmates in 424 of the 3,316 jails nationwide.

Perhaps the most striking finding is that the women in jail were more involved in illegal drugs than were the men. A third of the female inmates were in jail for a drug charge, compared to about a fourth of the male inmates. Convicted women were about twice as likely as convicted men to report having used a major drug (heroin, cocaine, PCP, or LSD) daily in the month before their arrest.

These and other computerized survey data collected for the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available through the National Criminal Justice Archive at the University of Michigan. I invite readers to avail themselves of these important national data.

Steven D. Dillingham, Ph.D.  
Director

- About 1 in every 4 convicted women in jail reported they had committed their current offense for money to buy drugs.
- About a fifth of all convicted female inmates reported being under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offense, compared to more than two-fifths of convicted male inmates.
- In 1989, 13% of female inmates were in jail for a violent offense, down from 21% in 1983.

- About half of the female inmates in 1989 who were convicted of a violent crime had victimized a female; a third had victimized a relative or intimate; and an eighth had victimized a minor.

- Nearly 1 in 3 women in jail were first-time offenders, compared to 1 in 5 men. Half of the female first-time offenders were in jail for a violent offense, drug trafficking, flight to avoid prosecution, a violation of pretrial release, or a weapons offense.

- In 1989, 47% of women in local jails were on probation, parole, pretrial release, or other criminal justice status when they were arrested for their current offense.

- More than two-thirds of the women in jail had children under age 18. About half of these women reported that their children were living with grandparents; less than a quarter reported that their children were living with the father.

- Approximately 40% of the female inmates had grown up in a single parent household, and an additional 17% lived in a household without either parent.

- Almost a third of all women in jail had a parent or guardian who abused drugs or alcohol.

- More than 4 of every 10 women in jail reported that another family member had served time in jail or prison. An estimated 34% of the women reported that a brother or sister had been incarcerated at some time in the past; 13% reported that a parent had been incarcerated.

- About 44% of the female inmates reported that they had been either physically or sexually abused at some time in their lives before their current imprisonment.

## Growth in the female jail population

Between 1983 and 1989, the number of inmates in local jails increased by 76.9%. During this time, the rate of growth for female inmates was 138.0%, nearly double that for male inmates, 72.7%. By 1989, women represented 9.5% of the jail inmates, up from 7.1% in 1983.\*

	Jail inmates		Percent change
	1983	1989	
Female	15,652	37,253	138.0%
Male	207,782	356,050	72.7%

Note: Data for 1983 are based on the National Jail Census. Data for 1989 are estimates from the Annual Survey of Jails.

Adult arrest statistics reflect similar changes. While the number of female arrests increased by 33.6% from 1983 to 1989, the number of male arrests increased by 22.2%. As a result, women accounted for 18.1% of all adult arrests in 1989, up from 16.6% in 1983.

	Adult arrests		Percent change
	1983	1989	
Female	1,614,400	2,192,300	33.6%
Male	8,123,300	9,926,600	22.2%

Note: The number of adult arrests was estimated by applying the sex and age distributions from reported arrests to the total estimated number of arrests. Adults are defined as persons age 18 and older.

\*On June 30, 1990, an estimated 37,318 female inmates and 368,000 male inmates were in local jails.

## Characteristics of jails holding female inmates, 1988 Census of Local Jails

On June 30, 1988, when the most recent census of local jails was conducted, 2,769 of the 3,316 jails nationwide held female inmates. Most of these jails held both men and women: 18 jails held only female inmates.

These facilities were locally administered. They held persons pending adjudication of their cases as well as persons sentenced to either jail or prison. The jails that held female inmates had multiple functions: about 46% were temporary holding or lockup facilities; 97% were detention facilities for persons facing local, State, or Federal charges; and 97% were correctional facilities for convicted persons.

Most of the jails that held women were small facilities. More than two-thirds of the 2,769 jails that held women had fewer than 50 inmates on an average day.

Inmates in these facilities were in cells, rooms, dormitories, or other living units that provided an average of 56.2 square feet of floor space. The average space per inmate in general housing in all facilities nationwide was 6.2 square feet smaller.

In the jails that held female inmates in 1988, there were 54,945 correctional officers, 13,689 of whom were women. On average, there were 4.5 inmates per correctional officer in these jails, compared to 4.6 inmates per officer in all jails nationwide.

The average annual cost per inmate in the jails that held female inmates in 1988 was \$10,232, approximately \$400 less

than the average per inmate in all jails nationwide. These costs were based on operating expenditures only (such as salaries, wages, food, supplies, and contractual services); capital expenditures were excluded.

Number of jails	
Female inmates only	18
Both female and male inmates	2,751
Number of jails, by size <sup>a</sup>	
Fewer than 50 inmates	1,888
50-249	658
250-499	126
500 or more	97
Percent of jails, by function <sup>b</sup>	
Temporary lockup/holding facility	46%
Detention center for persons awaiting trial	97%
Correction center for convicted offenders	97%
Number of correctional officers	
Total	54,945
Male	41,256
Female	13,689
Average square footage per inmate in general housing <sup>c</sup>	56.2 sq. ft.
Average number of jail inmates per correctional officer	4.5
Average annual operational expenditures per inmate <sup>d</sup>	\$10,232

Note: All data are based on the 2,769 jails that held female inmates on June 30, 1988, as reported in the 1988 Census of Local Jails.

<sup>a</sup>Based on the average daily population, July 1, 1987, to June 30, 1988.

<sup>b</sup>Detail may add to more than 100% because some jails have more than one function.

<sup>c</sup>General housing includes all housing units where inmates spend the night, such as cells, rooms, and dormitories. Excluded are special function units, such as units for protective custody, segregation, medical care, and substance abuse.

<sup>d</sup>Based on operating expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1987, and ending on June 30, 1988.

## Characteristics of female inmates

Compared to 1983, the female jail population in 1989 had a higher percentage of Hispanics, women older than 25, and those who had never married (table 1). The percentage of female inmates who were white and non-Hispanic decreased from 41.8% in 1983 to 37.8% in 1989, while the percentage of Hispanic females increased from 12.7% to 16.3%.

The median age of women in jail rose from 26 in 1983 to 28 in 1989. During this time the percentage of female inmates age 25 to 34 increased from 44.3% to 51.2%, while the percentage under age 25 decreased from 37.7% to 27.9%. Although the average age of men in jail also went up during the period, male inmates were still more likely than female inmates in 1989 to be under age 25.

In 1989 nearly a third of the female inmates were either divorced or separated, and nearly half had never been married. Although the percentage of women who had never married increased from 44.4% of all female inmates in 1983 to 48.9% in 1989, male inmates were still more likely than female inmates in 1989 to have never married (57.5%).

Female inmates on average were slightly better educated in 1989 than in 1983. An estimated 50.6% of the women in 1989 had completed high school or had some college education, compared to 47.0% in 1983. Female inmates were also slightly better educated than male inmates. In 1989, 45.8% of the male inmates had completed high school or attended college.

Female jail inmates were less likely than male inmates to have been employed at the time of their arrest (table 2). Among

female inmates who had not been in jail or prison in the month before their arrest, more than a third were employed, and about a third were unemployed and not looking for work. Among male inmates, however, more than two-thirds were employed, and fewer than an eighth were unemployed and not looking for work.

Women in jail were far more likely than men to report welfare income (29.8% compared to 7.7%). Women were also more likely than men to report income from illegal sources (17.5% compared to 11.4%).

Approximately 16.3% of the women in jail in 1989 had been out of jail or prison for less than 1 year before their current arrest. An estimated 16.8% of these women were employed full time; 47.4% were unemployed and not looking for work; and 34.3% reported income from illegal sources.

**Table 1. Characteristics of jail inmates, by sex, 1989 and 1983**

Characteristic	Percent of female inmates		Percent of male inmates	
	1989	1983	1989	1983
Race/Hispanic origin				
White non-Hispanic	37.8%	41.8%	38.7%	46.9%
Black non-Hispanic	43.4	42.2	41.5	37.1
Hispanic	16.3	12.7	17.5	14.3
Other <sup>a</sup>	2.5	3.2	2.3	1.7
Age				
17 or younger	.7%	.9%	1.6%	1.3%
18-24	27.2	36.8	33.2	40.7
25-34	51.2	44.3	42.1	38.2
35-44	15.6	12.4	16.9	12.4
45-54	3.9	4.3	4.6	4.9
55 or older	1.3	1.3	1.7	2.4
Median age	28 yrs.	26 yrs.	28 yrs.	26 yrs.
Marital status				
Married	16.2%	19.3%	19.3%	21.1%
Widowed	3.8	3.9	.7	1.2
Divorced	17.2	18.0	14.9	15.6
Separated	14.0	14.5	7.6	7.4
Never married	48.9	44.4	57.5	54.8
Education <sup>b</sup>				
8th grade or less	11.9%	13.7%	16.0%	17.9%
Some high school	37.6	39.2	38.2	41.5
High school graduate	34.9	32.3	33.0	28.9
Some college or more	15.7	14.7	12.8	11.6
Median grade completed	11	11	11	11
Number of inmates	37,383	15,566	358,171	206,537

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other racial groups.

<sup>b</sup>Based on highest grade completed.

**Table 2. Pre-arrest employment and income of jail inmates, by sex, 1989**

	Percent of female inmates			Percent of male inmates
	Free less than 1 year	Free at least 1 year	Total	Total
Pre-arrest employment				
Employed	26.1%	40.3%	38.0%	68.2%
Full time	16.8	29.2	27.2	56.6
Part time	9.3	11.1	10.8	11.5
Unemployed	74.0%	59.7%	62.0%	31.7%
Looking	26.6	28.7	28.4	20.4
Not looking	47.4	31.0	33.7	11.5
Income source <sup>a</sup>				
Wages/salaries	38.6%	61.6%	58.0%	84.7%
Family or friend	28.4	31.6	31.1	20.7
Welfare	27.9	30.1	29.8	7.7
Illegal income	34.3	14.4	17.5	11.4
Social Security	7.2	7.3	7.3	5.4
Unemployment	.3	2.9	2.5	4.5
Educational grants/scholarships	2.6	2.1	2.2	2.0
Other	2.9	3.9	3.7	3.2
Pre-arrest monthly income				
Less than \$500 <sup>b</sup>	47.0%	57.4%	55.7%	42.3%
\$500-\$999	27.9	21.1	22.2	25.0
\$1,000 or more	25.0	21.5	22.1	32.7
Number of inmates	5,774	29,586	35,360	341,662

Note: Data exclude inmates free less than 1 month. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Percents add to more than 100% because inmates may have had more than one source of income.

<sup>b</sup>Includes inmates reporting no income.

Overall, female inmates reported lower levels of monthly income than male inmates: 55.7% of the women and 42.3% of the men reported a monthly income of less than \$500. Those women who had been out of jail or prison for at least a year before their current arrest reported slightly lower monthly incomes than those who had been free for less than a year.

### Current offense

The distribution of offenses for female inmates shifted dramatically between 1983 and 1989 (table 3). Over the 6 years, as the proportion of accused or convicted drug

offenders among women in jail rose, the proportions of property and violent offenders fell. In 1983 about 1 of every 8 female inmates were in jail for a drug offense; in 1989 nearly 1 of every 3 were in jail for drugs. The increase in female drug offenders between 1983 and 1989 accounted for nearly half of the total increase of the female jail population.

The percentage of women in jail for property offenses decreased from 42.7% in 1983 to 31.9% in 1989. Larceny/theft and fraud, the two most prevalent crime types among female inmates in 1983, declined from 33.6% to 24.5% in 1989.

The percentage of women in jail for violent offenses also declined, from 21.3% in 1983 to 13.2% in 1989. Assault and robbery remained the two most prevalent violent crimes, accounting for more than two-thirds of violent offenses committed by the women in 1989.

Female inmates were far more likely than male inmates to be in jail for a drug offense. An estimated 33.6% of the women, compared to 21.9% of the men, were in jail for a drug offense. Male inmates, however, were nearly twice as likely as female inmates to be in jail for a violent offense and about equally likely as female inmates to be in jail for a property or public-order offense.

### Detention status

In 1989 more than 6 in 10 women in jail were convicted of an offense (table 4). An estimated 52.2% of the female inmates were sentenced to jail or prison, while an additional 9.2% were awaiting a sentence. Nearly 39% of the female inmates were unconvicted: 22.6% had been arraigned and were awaiting or standing trial at the time of the survey, and 16.0% were awaiting arraignment.

Among jail inmates, women were somewhat more likely than men to have been convicted of an offense. About 57% of the male inmates had been convicted — 49.9% were sentenced and 7.2% were awaiting a sentence.

**Table 3. Most serious offense of jail inmates, by sex, 1989 and 1983**

Most serious offense	Percent of jail inmates			
	1989		1983	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
All offenses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Violent offenses</b>	13.2%	23.5%	21.3%	31.4%
Murder <sup>a</sup>	1.8	2.9	3.8	4.1
Negligent manslaughter	.4	.5	1.5	.6
Kidnaping	1.1	.7	.6	1.4
Rape	0	.9	.1	1.6
Other sexual assault	.2	2.8	.2	2.2
Robbery	3.9	7.0	6.2	11.5
Assault	5.2	7.4	8.1	8.7
Other violent <sup>b</sup>	.6	1.1	.7	1.3
<b>Property offenses</b>	31.9%	29.9%	42.7%	38.3%
Burglary	4.0	11.4	5.1	15.0
Larceny/theft	12.9	7.4	18.4	11.2
Motor vehicle theft	.9	3.0	.7	2.5
Arson	.6	.7	.6	.9
Fraud	11.6	3.2	15.2	4.2
Stolen property	1.4	2.5	1.7	2.6
Other property <sup>c</sup>	.5	1.7	1.0	2.0
<b>Drug offenses</b>	33.6%	21.9%	13.1%	9.0%
Possession	14.9	9.2	7.1	4.6
Trafficking	16.9	11.5	4.6	4.0
Other/unspecified	1.9	1.2	1.4	.5
<b>Public-order offenses</b>	19.0%	23.2%	22.0%	20.5%
Weapons	1.4	2.0	1.1	2.4
Obstruction of justice	3.6	2.8	3.1	1.9
Traffic	1.3	2.8	1.3	2.2
Driving while intoxicated <sup>d</sup>	3.6	9.3	5.2	7.1
Drunkenness/morals <sup>e</sup>	5.3	1.3	8.3	3.0
Violation of parole/probation <sup>f</sup>	3.6	3.0	2.0	2.3
Other public-order <sup>g</sup>	.2	2.0	.9	1.7
<b>Other offenses<sup>h</sup></b>	2.2%	1.5%	.9%	.8%
Number of inmates	35,625	344,535	15,259	204,314

Note: Excludes an estimated 15,393 inmates in 1989 and 3,979 inmates in 1983 because their offense was unknown. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

<sup>b</sup>Includes blackmail, extortion, hit-and-run driving with bodily injury, child abuse, and criminal endangerment.

<sup>c</sup>Includes destruction of property, vandalism, hit-and-run driving without bodily injury, trespassing, and possession of burglary tools.

<sup>d</sup>Includes driving while intoxicated and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

<sup>e</sup>Includes drunkenness, vagrancy, disorderly conduct, unlawful assembly, morals, and commercialized vice.

<sup>f</sup>Includes parole or probation violations, escape, AWOL, and flight to avoid prosecution.

<sup>g</sup>Includes rioting, abandonment, non-support, immigration violations, invasion of privacy, liquor law violations, tax evasion, and bribery.

<sup>h</sup>Includes juvenile offenses and unspecified offenses.

**Table 4. Detention status of jail inmates, by sex, 1989**

Detention status	Percent of jail inmates	
	Female	Male
<b>Convicted</b>	61.4%	57.1%
Sentenced	52.2	49.9
Awaiting sentence	9.2	7.2
<b>Unconvicted</b>	38.6%	43.0%
Arraigned and awaiting trial or on trial	22.6	26.5
Not yet arraigned	16.0	16.5
Number of inmates	35,625	345,441

Note: Excludes an estimated 14,488 inmates whose detention status was unknown.

Convicted and unconvicted female inmates differed greatly in the types of offenses for which they were currently held (table 5). Convicted female inmates were more likely than those awaiting trial or arraignment to be in jail for a property or public-order offense, but less likely to be in jail for a violent offense. Nearly 20% of the unconvicted female inmates were in jail for a violent offense, compared to less than 10% of the convicted female inmates.

Among convicted female inmates, the percentage of black women in jail for a violent offense was almost twice that of white women (12.6% compared to 6.4%). More than 1 in 4 white women were convicted of a public-order offense, compared to about 1 in 8 black women.

### Sentence length

About half of the female jail inmates in 1989 were sentenced. More than three-quarters of these women expected to serve their sentences in a local jail (table 6). An estimated 15.4% of the sentenced female inmates were expected to serve their time in prison, compared to 11.6% of the sentenced male inmates.

On average, women and men sentenced to jail received very similar sentences: half of both women and men reported a jail sentence of 6 months or less. Among female jail inmates sentenced to State or Federal prison, half received a maximum, sentence of 60 months or less. On aver-

age, women received shorter sentences than men; the mean prison sentence for women was 72 months and for men, 103 months. This difference is explained in part by the larger percentage of violent offenders among men awaiting transfer to prison.

More than a third of the sentenced female jail inmates had special conditions imposed as part of their sentence, while about a quarter of the male inmates had a special condition imposed. Women were more likely than men to have a sentence that included drug treatment (13.7% versus 4.5%), victim restitution (9.4% versus 5.5%), or community service (7.7% versus 3.0%).

**Table 5. Most serious current offense of female jail inmates, by conviction status and race, 1989**

Most serious offense	Percent of convicted female inmates			Percent of unconvicted female inmates		
	All*	White	Black	All*	White	Black
All offenses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Violent offenses</b>	9.2%	6.4%	12.6%	19.6%	16.7%	20.0%
Homicide	1.1	.8	1.7	3.9	3.7	4.4
Robbery	3.5	2.0	5.3	4.6	3.1	6.6
Assault	3.6	2.9	4.4	7.7	7.4	8.4
Other violent	.9	.7	1.1	3.4	2.5	0.6
<b>Property offenses</b>	34.5%	31.8%	38.8%	27.9%	26.3%	30.1%
Burglary	2.9	3.5	2.4	5.7	5.6	5.6
Larceny/theft	15.4	13.7	17.9	9.0	7.5	11.4
Fraud	13.3	11.5	15.6	8.9	9.3	8.2
Other property	2.9	3.1	2.9	4.2	3.9	4.9
<b>Drug offenses</b>	32.7%	32.2%	33.8%	35.1%	36.2%	36.5%
Possession	16.5	15.1	17.7	12.3	11.4	14.5
Trafficking	15.4	16.1	15.3	19.3	21.5	18.2
Other drug	.8	.9	.8	3.6	3.3	3.8
<b>Public-order offense</b>	21.4%	27.9%	11.9%	15.3%	18.2%	11.7%
Obstruction of justice	2.8	3.8	1.7	5.0	5.5	4.8
Driving while intoxicated	5.3	9.4	.4	1.0	2.0	0
Commercialized vice	5.7	5.5	5.0	2.2	1.5	2.5
Violation of parole/probation	4.1	4.4	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.0
Other public-order	3.5	4.9	1.7	4.4	6.1	2.3
<b>Other offenses</b>	2.3%	1.7%	2.9%	2.1%	2.6%	1.8%
Number of inmates	21,854	11,596	9,637	13,771	6,703	6,457

Note: Excludes an estimated 1,758 jail inmates whose conviction status or offense was unknown. Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other racial groups.

**Table 6. Sentence length and special sentencing conditions of jail inmates, by sex, 1989**

	Sentenced jail inmates, 1989	
	Female	Male
<b>Location where sentence was to be served</b>		
Jail	77.0%	76.1%
Prison	15.4	11.6
Unknown	7.6	12.3
<b>Maximum sentence length</b>		
Sentenced to jail		
Median	6 mos.	6 mos.
Mean	16	18
Awaiting transfer to State or Federal prison		
Median	60 mos.	72 mos.
Mean	72	103
<b>Special conditions*</b>		
Any condition or restriction	35.8%	26.8%
Restitution	9.2	5.5
Community service	7.7	3.0
Drug treatment	13.7	4.5
Alcohol treatment	7.2	6.4
Psychiatric/psychological counseling	1.3	1.9
Regular employment	6.1	2.4
House arrest	1.6	1.0
Other	15.5	13.0
Number of inmates	16,375	147,281

Note: Data include only those inmates who were new court commitments with a valid sentence length.

\*Detail may add to more than 100% because an inmate may have received more than one special sentencing condition.

## Criminal justice status at arrest

At the time of their arrest, nearly half of the female jail inmates were already in some criminal justice status (table 7). An estimated 31.6% of all female inmates were on probation; 5.5% were on parole; and 5.7% were out on bail or bond.

Convicted women were more likely than unconvicted women to have been on probation at the time of their arrest (39.9% compared to 22.4%) but were less likely than unconvicted women to have been out

**Table 7. Criminal justice status of female jail inmates, by conviction status, 1989**

Criminal justice status at arrest	Percent of female inmates		
	Total	Convicted	Unconvicted
None	53.2%	45.7%	59.2%
Status	46.8%	54.3%	40.7%
On probation	31.6	39.9	22.4
On parole	5.5	6.2	5.0
On bail/bond	5.7	4.6	8.1
On pretrial	2.1	1.3	3.7
Other release*	1.4	1.7	1.0
Escape	.5	.6	.5
Number of inmates	37,383	21,854	13,771

Note: Totals include inmates whose conviction status was unknown or who had no offense.  
\*Includes inmates on work release, study release, furlough, and other conditional release.

**Table 8. Criminal history of jail inmates, by sex, 1989 and 1983**

Criminal history	Percent of jail inmates, 1989		Percent of jail inmates, 1983	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
No previous sentence	31.3%	21.5%	30.9%	19.3%
Current violent offense	6.2	6.7	7.9	7.8
Current nonviolent offense	25.1	14.8	23.0	11.5
Violent recidivists	16.2%	31.4%	20.7%	37.8%
Current and prior violent	2.2	8.1	5.4	11.5
Current violent only	6.2	10.9	8.1	12.5
Prior violent only	7.8	12.4	7.2	13.8
Nonviolent recidivists	52.4%	47.1%	48.4%	42.8%
Prior minor public-order offenses only	4.1	3.4	8.1	4.1
Other prior offenses	48.3	43.7	40.3	38.7
Number of inmates	35,333	340,249	15,034	200,241

Note: Excludes an estimated 19,971 inmates in 1989 and 8,277 inmates in 1983 for whom current offense and prior probation/incarceration offenses were unknown.

on pretrial release or bail (11.9% compared to 5.9%).

## Criminal history

Female inmates were more likely than male inmates to be first-time offenders (table 8). In 1989 nearly 1 in 3 women had never before been convicted, compared to about 1 in 5 men. Although these women had no prior offenses, many had been either charged with or convicted of a serious crime. Nearly half of the female first-time offenders were in jail for a violent offense, drug trafficking, flight to avoid prosecution, a violation of pretrial release, or a weapons offense.

Offenses	Percent of female, first-time offenders
Total	100.0%
Violent	19.1%
Property	23.7%
Drug	38.9%
Possession	11.7
Trafficking	24.9
Public-order	15.6%
Weapons	2.1
Driving while intoxicated	3.8
Violation of pretrial release or flight	1.9
Other	2.7%

The majority of women were nonviolent recidivists: 52.4% had in the past been sentenced to probation, jail, or prison for a

nonviolent offense and were currently in jail for a nonviolent offense. Women were far less likely than men to be in jail for a violent offense or to have a prior sentence for a violent offense. In 1989, current or prior violent offenders accounted for 22.4% of the women and 38.1% of the men; in 1983, they accounted for 28.6% of the women and 45.6% of the men. In general, female inmates in both years had similar criminal histories; however, the percentage of violent recidivists decreased slightly from 20.7% in 1983 to 16.2% in 1989.

Criminal records of women in jail were somewhat shorter than those of men (table 9). In 1989 more than half of the women in jail had either one or no prior offenses, compared to about two-fifths of the men. About 32% of the women reported 3 or more prior sentences, while more than 40% of the men reported 3 or more priors. Women were also less likely than men to have had juvenile records (19.3% compared to 31.6%).

Female inmates tended to be in jail for the same type of crime for which they had received a sentence in the past. For

**Table 9. Prior sentences of jail inmates, by sex, 1989**

Prior sentence	Percent of jail inmates	
	Female	Male
None	33.1%	22.4%
Juvenile	4.5	7.9
Adult only	47.6	45.9
Both	14.8	23.7
Number of times		
0	33.1%	22.4%
1	20.4	20.6
2	14.5	16.7
3-5	18.9	22.9
6-10	7.9	11.0
11 or more	5.1	6.3
Number of inmates	35,822	342,532

Note: Excludes an estimated 17,200 inmates for whom data on prior sentences to probation or incarceration were unknown. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

example, women currently in jail for a violent offense were more likely than those for other offenses to have a prior sentence for a violent offense (table 10). An estimated 15.5% of the female offenders currently in jail for a violent offense had been convicted of a violent offense in the past, compared to 9.7% of the property offenders and 7.9% of the drug offenders.

The current offenses of nonviolent offenders, considered in relation to past convictions, showed the same pattern. An estimated 64.1% of the female inmates in jail for a property offense had a prior conviction for a property offense; 32.9% of the drug offenders had a prior drug conviction; and 55.9% of those in jail for a public-order offense had a prior public-order offense.

#### Violent female inmates and their victims

Most women in local jails who had been convicted of a violent crime reported that they had victimized either someone close to them or someone they knew (table 11). In 1989 an estimated 16.0% had victimized a relative; 15.4% had victimized an intimate (a boyfriend, girlfriend or ex-spouse); 16.8% had victimized a friend or other person they had known well; and 13.3% had victimized a casual acquaintance.

About half of the women (49.6%) and men (49.3%) in jail following conviction for a violent crime had victimized a female. A

smaller percentage of female inmates than of male inmates had victimized a minor (14.4% versus 24.8%).

**Table 11. Characteristics of victims of convicted violent jail inmates, by sex of inmates, 1989**

Victim characteristic	Percent of convicted jail inmates	
	Female	Male
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	50.4%	50.7%
Female	48.5	40.7
Both	1.1	8.6
<b>Race</b>		
White	57.0%	65.7%
Black	39.0	28.3
Other	4.0	2.4
Mixed	0	3.6
<b>Age</b>		
Minor	13.5%	22.7%
Adult	85.6	75.2
Both	.9	2.1
<b>Victim/offender relationship</b>		
Close	31.4%	22.9%
Relative	16.0	16.1
Intimate	15.4	6.8
Known	30.1%	32.9%
Well-known	16.8	13.1
Casual	13.3	19.8
Stranger	38.4%	44.1%
Number of inmates	1,850	31,816

Note: For sex, race, and age of the victim, the categories "both" and "mixed" refer only to multiple-victim crimes where the characteristics of the victims differed. The victim-offender relationship is based on the closest relation from among multiple victims, if relationships differed.

#### Drug use

In general, female inmates used more drugs and used those drugs more frequently than male inmates (table 12). More than half of the convicted female inmates had used drugs in the month prior to their current offense. A higher percentage of women than men had used drugs daily in the month prior to the offense (40.1% compared to 28.6%) and at the time of the current offense (37.5% compared to 25.9%).

Women were more likely than men to have used a major drug (heroin, cocaine or crack, LSD, PCP, or methadone) in the month before their current offense. More than twice as many women as men had used a major drug daily. Nearly a third of the convicted women, but less than a fifth of the men, committed their offense under the influence of a major drug.

**Table 12. Drug use history of convicted jail inmates, by sex, 1989**

Drug use	Percent of inmates	
	Female	Male
<b>Any drug<sup>a</sup></b>		
Ever used	83.6%	77.4%
Ever used on a regular basis	70.0	56.8
Used in the month before current offense	55.1	42.7
Used daily in the month before current offense	40.1	28.6
Under the influence at the time of current offense	37.5	25.9
<b>Major drug<sup>b</sup></b>		
Ever used	70.7%	54.5%
Ever used on a regular basis	56.7	35.4
Used in the month before current offense	43.9	25.9
Used daily in the month before current offense	31.8	15.7
Under the influence at the time of current offense	31.3	16.8
Number of inmates	21,782	196,620

<sup>a</sup>Includes cocaine, heroin, PCP, LSD, methadone, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, methaqualone, and all other drugs.

<sup>b</sup>Includes only cocaine, heroin, PCP, LSD, and methadone.

**Table 10. Criminal history of female jail inmates, by most serious current offense, 1989**

Criminal history	Most serious current offense				
	Total	Violent	Property	Drug	Public-order
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
First offense	31.5%	45.4%	23.3%	36.6%	26.0%
Previous offenses	68.5%	54.6%	76.7%	63.4%	74.0%
Violent offenses	10.0	15.5	9.7	7.9	10.8
Property offenses	40.2	27.1	64.1	30.3	30.3
Drug offenses	20.6	12.9	11.4	32.9	19.4
Public-order offenses	30.5	21.4	23.5	27.1	55.9
Number of inmates	35,087	4,656	11,233	11,771	6,642

Note: Excludes an estimated 2,296 inmates for whom data on present or prior offenses were unknown. Subtotals may add to more than total because inmates may have been sentenced more than once or for more than one type of offense.



Drug use among female inmates changed between 1983 and 1989 (table 13). The percentage of convicted female inmates who reported using cocaine or crack in the

month before their offense more than doubled, from 15.2% in 1983 to 39.3% in 1989. The percentage who had reported use of marijuana or hashish declined from

33.4% to 23.4%. The use of other types of drugs either declined or remained about the same during the period.

**Table 13. Drug use by convicted female jail inmates, by type of drug, 1989 and 1983**

Type of drug	Percent of convicted female inmates who had used drugs			
	In the month before the offense		At the time of the offense	
	1989	1983	1989	1983
Any drug	55.1%	50.5%	37.5%	31.2%
Major drug	43.8%	27.1%	31.3%	20.9%
Cocaine or crack	39.3	15.2	24.9	7.4
Heroin	15.0	17.3	12.0	12.9
LSD	.8	1.4	.1	.7
PCP	2.1	3.7	.8	2.2
Methadone	1.1	1.7	.7	2.2
Other drug	27.4%	39.8%	9.9%	16.6%
Marijuana	23.4	33.4	5.0	8.0
Amphetamines	6.6	8.7	4.1	4.0
Barbiturates	3.0	6.9	1.4	3.1
Methaqualone	1.0	2.6	.2	1.0

Note: Detail may add to more than total because an inmate may have been using more than one drug.

The percentage of convicted female inmates reporting that they were under the influence of drugs at the time of the current offense increased from 31.2% in 1983 to 37.5% in 1989. More than 3 of every 10 convicted female inmates in 1989 had been under the influence of a major drug at the time of their offense. In 1989 an estimated 24.9% had been under the influence of cocaine or crack — more than triple the percentage in 1983 (7.4%). The reported use of drugs other than cocaine or crack at the time of the offense, however, declined from 1983 to 1989.

Many women in jail have a long history of prior drug use and past treatment for drug abuse. Nearly 1 in 5 convicted female inmates in 1989 said they committed their current offense in order to get money to buy drugs. A quarter of the convicted female inmates had a prior sentence to probation,

### How sentenced jail inmates used their time, 1989

Data on how inmates spend their time while serving their jail sentences were collected for the first time in the 1989 survey. Each respondent was asked a series of questions concerning the amount of time spent inside and outside their cells, doing physical exercise or working at an assigned job.

	Inmates sentenced to jail	
	Female	Male
Average number of hours per day spent in cell or room	16.8 hrs.	14.6 hrs.
Average number of hours per day spent doing physical exercise outside cell	1.2 hrs.	1.5 hrs.

On average, female inmates said they spend almost 17 hours a day in their cells or other housing units and about an hour a day outside of their cells doing physical exercise. Male inmates said they spent fewer hours in their cells (an average of about 15 hours per day) and slightly more time exercising (1.5 hours per day).

Women were less likely than men to have work assignments: 43.8% of the women compared to 58.9% of the men said they had work assignments inside or outside the jail facility. About an equal percentage of female (37.7%) and male inmates (41.1%) reported they had been assigned work within the facility; however, female inmates were significantly less likely than male inmates to work outside the jail (8.1% versus 23.2%).

Among jail inmates with work assignments, females reported working an average of 4.2 hours per day; males reported an average of 5.9 hours per day. The most common work assignment cited by female inmates was janitorial work (39.2%), followed by food preparation (18.0%), and then by other service jobs including work in the library, stockroom, or office (12.9%). The most common work assignment cited by male inmates was maintenance (28.5%), followed by food preparation (25.5%) and janitorial work (23.3%).

	Inmates sentenced to jail	
	Female	Male
Percent of inmates with work assignments		
Total <sup>a</sup>	43.8%	58.9%
Inside the jail	37.7	41.1
Outside the jail	8.1	23.2
Average number of hours per day spent working <sup>b</sup>	4.2 hrs.	5.9 hrs.
Percent of inmates assigned work, by type of work <sup>a,b</sup>		
Janitorial	39.2%	23.3%
Maintenance	5.4	28.5
Goods production/farming	4.2	5.9
Food preparation	18.0	25.5
Hospital, infirmary or other medical services	4.6	.2
Laundry	9.8	5.0
Other services (library, stockroom, store, office help, etc.)	12.9	7.7
Other	10.5	12.7

<sup>a</sup>Detail may add to more than total because inmates may have had work assignment both inside and outside the facility or more than one work assignment.

<sup>b</sup>Based on inmates with work assignments.

jail, or prison for a drug law violation. More than a third had participated in a drug treatment program. About a 10th were receiving treatment at the time of the survey.

	Percent of convicted female inmates, 1989
Who committed offense to get money for drugs	21.6%
Who had a prior sentence for a drug offense	24.5%
Who had ever received drug treatment	36.6%
Who were in treatment at time of the survey	11.2%

**Table 14. Alcohol use and treatment of jail inmates, 1989**

	Percent of jail inmates	
	Female	Male
Who had ever been an alcoholic	13.2%	21.7%
Who had ever participated in an alcohol abuse treatment program	9.5%	15.3%
Who were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the current offense*	20.6%	43.5%
Who reported drinking for 5 or more hours before the current offense*	9.0%	19.2%
Who reported being drunk or very drunk at time of the current offense*	8.4%	20.8%

\*Based on convicted inmates only.

## Alcohol abuse and treatment

The percentages of convicted female inmates were half those of convicted male inmates for each of three measures of alcohol use — being under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offense, drinking for 5 or more hours before the current offense, or being drunk and very drunk when committing the offense (table 14). About 21% of the women in jail said that they had committed their offense under the influence of alcohol, compared to an estimated 44% of the men. Nine percent of the women reported drinking for 5 or more hours before the offense, and 8% said they were drunk. Among the men about 20% had been drinking for 5 or more hours and more than 20% reported committing their offense while drunk.

Women also had lower levels of prior alcohol abuse than men. About 1 in every 8 female inmates versus 1 in 5 male inmates said they had been alcoholics at some time before their admission to jail. A smaller percentage of the female inmates (9.5%) than male inmates (15.3%) had participated in an alcohol abuse treatment program.

## Mothers in jail

A large majority of women in jail were mothers. Nearly three-quarters of the women in jail had children, and more than two-thirds of the women had a child or children under age 18 (table 15). At the time of the survey, these 25,173 women had more than 52,000 children under age 18. Two-thirds of the women with young children were living with their children before entering jail. Black women were slightly more likely than white women to have children under age 18 and to have been living with them before entering jail.

Relatives cared for most of the children of mothers in jail. About a quarter of the mothers with young children said that one

or more of their children were living with the father at the time of the survey. Half of the women said their children were living with a grandparent, most often a maternal grandparent, and a fifth said their children were living with other relatives. Less than a tenth of the mothers indicated that their children were in a foster home or other institutional setting.

An estimated 84.5% of the women indicated that they intended to live with their young children after release from jail. More than 90% of the black mothers, compared to 77.7% of the white mothers, said they would live with their children after their release.

**Table 15. Children of female jail inmates, by race, 1989**

Characteristic	Percent of female inmates		
	All*	White	Black
<b>Have children</b>			
No	26.2%	28.6%	23.3%
Yes	73.8	71.5	76.7
Any under age 18	67.9	64.9	71.3
Adult only	5.9	6.6	5.4
Number of inmates	37,071	19,306	16,513
<b>Number of children under age 18<sup>a</sup></b>			
1	37.8%	38.9%	35.5%
2	33.4	37.0	31.3
3	17.9	14.9	21.1
4	6.4	5.3	7.9
5 or more	4.4	3.9	4.2
<b>Lived with child(ren) under 18 before entering jail<sup>a</sup></b>			
No	32.8%	35.9%	27.7%
Yes	67.2	64.1	72.3
<b>Where child(ren) under 18 live(s) now<sup>ab</sup></b>			
Child's father	23.5%	30.1%	15.6%
Maternal grandparents	41.6	34.9	50.0
Paternal grandparents	8.7	9.3	7.1
Other relative	22.9	18.6	27.0
Friends	4.3	4.2	4.5
Foster home	6.5	7.2	6.1
Agency/institution	1.6	2.2	0.9
Other	4.0	5.0	1.9
<b>Plan to live with child(ren) under 18 after release from jail<sup>a</sup></b>			
Yes	84.5%	77.7%	91.7%
No	12.4	18.1	6.3
Don't know	3.1	4.3	1.9

Note: Female inmates had an estimated total of 52,267 children under age 18.

\*Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other racial groups.

<sup>a</sup>Percents are based on those inmates with children under age 18.

<sup>b</sup>Percents add to more than 100% because inmates with more than one child may have provided multiple responses.

## Family background

More women than men grew up in homes with either one or both parents absent: 57.3% of female inmates and 51.8% of male inmates (table 16). Women in jail were also slightly more likely than men to have grown up or ever lived in a foster home.

Women were more likely than men in jail to have at least one close family member who had been in jail or prison. More than 44% of women had an immediate family member or spouse who had been incarcerated, and, for 34%, that family member was a brother or sister. About 34.5% of male inmates had a close family member who had been incarcerated.

Nearly a third of all women in jail reported that while they were growing up one or both

of their parents or guardians had abused alcohol or drugs: 29.3% reported parental alcohol abuse and 7.6% drug abuse. Male inmates were somewhat less likely to report parental alcohol or drug abuse. About a quarter of the men said a parent or guardian had abused alcohol or drugs. White and black female inmates had different family backgrounds. More than half of white female inmates, but less than a third of black female inmates, had grown up in a household with both parents. Nearly 47% of black women had lived primarily with their mothers when growing up, and grandparents had raised about 12.6%.

Black women were slightly more likely than whites to have had a family member ever serving a sentence in a jail or prison. About 42.1% of black women versus 26.8% of white women had a brother or sister with a prior incarceration. While white women

were more than twice as likely as black women to have had a father who had been incarcerated (13.2% compared to 5.6%), black women were slightly more likely to have had a mother with a prior incarceration (3.9% compared to 2.2%).

Parents of white women in jail had a higher rate of drug or alcohol abuse than parents of black women, 37.7% compared to 22.1%.

## Physical and sexual abuse

More than 4 of every 10 women reported that they had been abused at some time before entering jail: 32.7% physically and 36.5% sexually (table 17). An estimated 31.3% of the women said they had been abused by an adult before age 18, and 29.5% said they had been abused since age 18.

**Table 16. Family structure, incarceration of family members, and parental abuse of alcohol or drugs reported by jail inmates, by sex and race, 1989**

	Percent of female inmates		Percent of male inmates	
	White	Black	All <sup>a</sup>	All <sup>a</sup>
<b>Person(s) lived with most of the time while growing up</b>				
Both parents	54.6%	30.0%	42.7%	48.2%
Mother only	27.8	46.8	37.2	35.3
Father only	3.6	2.4	3.1	3.6
Grandparents	7.0	12.6	9.3	6.8
Other relatives	2.5	4.2	3.2	3.1
Friends	1.5	.9	1.2	.3
Foster home	2.0	2.5	2.3	1.4
Agency or institution	.3	.1	.3	.6
Other	.7	.6	.7	.7
<b>Ever lived in a foster home, agency or institution while growing up</b>				
No	80.0%	87.8%	82.7%	86.7%
Yes	20.0	12.2	17.3	13.3
<b>Family member ever incarcerated</b>				
No	60.0%	51.1%	55.7%	65.5%
Yes <sup>b</sup>	40.0	48.9	44.3	34.5
Spouse	3.5	1.0	2.2	.1
Mother	2.2	3.9	2.9	1.2
Father	13.2	5.6	9.7	7.7
Brother/sister	26.8	42.1	34.0	28.4
Child	.7	.6	.6	.1
<b>Parent or guardian abused alcohol or drugs while inmate was growing up</b>				
No	62.4%	78.0%	68.9%	74.2%
Yes	37.7	22.1	31.0	25.8
Alcohol	27.5	17.4	23.4	22.3
Drugs	2.2	1.1	1.7	.7
Both alcohol and drugs	8.0	3.6	5.9	2.8
<b>Number of inmates</b>	<b>19,451</b>	<b>16,661</b>	<b>37,383</b>	<b>358,171</b>

<sup>a</sup>Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other racial groups.

<sup>b</sup>Detail may add to more than total because more than one family member may have been incarcerated.

**Table 17. Prior physical or sexual abuse of jail inmates, by sex, 1989**

	Percent of jail inmates		
	Total	Female	Male
<b>Ever physically or sexually abused before current incarceration</b>			
No	84.0%	55.6%	86.9%
Yes	16.0	44.4	13.1
Before age 18 (by an adult)	11.4	31.3	9.4
Since age 18	8.1	29.5	5.9
Physically abused	13.1	32.7	11.1
Sexually abused	7.6	36.5	4.6

Note: Sexual abuse includes fondling, molestation, incest, sodomy, rape, and other types of sexual assault. Detail adds to more than total because some inmates were abused both before and since age 18 or were both sexually and physically abused.

**Table 18. Criminal history of female inmates, by prior physical or sexual abuse, 1989**

Criminal history	Percent of female inmates		
	Total	Never abused	Ever abused
No previous sentence	30.8%	33.2%	27.9%
Current violent offense	6.0	5.5	6.6
Current nonviolent offense	24.8	27.7	21.3
<b>Violent recidivists</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
Current and prior violent	2.2	1.6	2.9
Current violent only	6.1	5.7	6.5
Prior violent only	7.9	5.9	10.3
<b>Nonviolent recidivists</b>	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>
Prior minor public-order offenses only	4.2	3.5	5.0
Other prior offenses	46.3	50.0	47.5
<b>Number of inmates</b>	<b>34,600</b>	<b>19,066</b>	<b>15,534</b>

Note: Percents may not add to total because of rounding.

Compared to men in jail, the women were at least 3 times more likely to have been abused before age 18 and 5 times more likely at age 18 or after.

Abused women were more likely than other women in jail to be violent recidivists: 19.7% of the abused women, compared to 13.2% of those who had not been abused, were recidivists with a prior or current violent offense (table 18).

## Methodology

A jail is defined as a confinement facility administered by a local government agency that holds persons detained pending adjudication and persons committed after adjudication, usually for sentences of a year or less. Convicted jail inmates are awaiting sentencing, serving sentences to jail confinement, awaiting transfer to a prison, or serving a prison sentence in jail by arrangement with prison authorities. Unconvicted inmates are those who have been unable to obtain pretrial release, those detained pending trial, those on trial at the time the survey was being conducted, and those held for other governmental entities.

The 1989 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails was conducted for the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Through personal interviews during July, August, and September 1989, data were collected on individual characteristics of jail inmates, current offenses and sentences, characteristics of victims, criminal histories, jail activities and programs, prior drug and alcohol use and treatment, and health care services provided while in jail. Similar surveys of jail inmates were conducted in 1972, 1978, and 1983.

## Sample design

The sample for the 1989 survey was selected from a universe of 3,316 jails enumerated in the 1986 National Jail Census. The sample design was a stratified two-stage selection. In the first stage six separate strata were formed based on the size of the male and female populations. In two strata all jails were selected; in the remaining four strata, a systematic sample of jails was selected proportional to the size of each jail. Overall, a total of 424 local jails were selected. In a second stage, interviewers visited each selected facility and systematically selected a sample of male and female inmates using predetermined procedures. As a result,

approximately 1 of every 70 men were selected, and depending on the stratum, 1 of every 14, 15, or 70 women were selected. A total of 5,675 interviews were completed, yielding an overall response rate of 92.3%.

Based on the completed interviews, estimates for the entire population were developed using weighting factors derived from the original probability of selection in the sample. These factors were adjusted for variable rates of nonresponse across strata and inmate characteristics. Further adjustments were made to control the survey estimates to counts of jail inmates obtained from the 1986 National Jail Census and the 1989 Sample Survey of Jails.

## Accuracy of the estimates

The accuracy of the estimates presented in this report depends on two types of errors: sampling and nonsampling. Sampling error is variation that may occur by chance be-

cause a sample rather than a complete enumeration of the population was conducted. Nonsampling error can be attributed to many sources, such as non-response, differences in the interpretation of questions among inmates, recall difficulties, and processing errors. In any survey the full extent of the nonsampling error is never known.

The sampling error, as measured by an estimated standard error, varies by the size of the estimate and the size of the base population. Estimates of the standard errors have been calculated for the 1989 and 1983 surveys of jail inmates, specifically for the populations of female jail inmates (see appendix table). These standard errors may be used to construct confidence intervals around percentages in this report. For example, the 95-percent confidence interval around the percentage of female jail inmates in 1989 who were in jail for a drug offense is 33.6% plus or minus 1.96 times 1.3 (or 31.1% to 36.1%).

**Appendix table. Standard errors of the estimated percentages, female jail inmates, 1989 and 1983**

Base of the estimate and year	Estimated percentages					
	98 or 2	90 or 10	80 or 20	70 or 30	60 or 40	50
1000						
1989	2.4	5.1	6.8	7.8	8.3	8.5
1983	1.1	2.3	3.1	3.5	3.8	3.9
2000						
1989	1.7	3.6	4.8	5.5	5.9	6.0
1983	0.8	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.7
5000						
1989	1.1	2.3	3.0	3.5	3.7	3.8
1983	0.5	1.0	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.7
10,000						
1989	0.8	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.7
1983	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2
15,000						
1989	0.6	1.3	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.2
1983	0.3	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0
20,000						
1989	0.5	1.1	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9
25,000						
1989	0.5	1.0	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.7
30,000						
1989	0.4	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.6
37,383*						
1989	0.4	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.4

Note: The reliability of an estimated percentage depends on the size of the percentage and its base. Each standard error when multiplied by 1.96 provides a 95-percent confidence interval around an estimated percentage. To calculate the standard error of the difference between two estimated percentages, take the square root of the sum of each squared standard error for the percentage being compared.

\*The total number of female jail inmates in 1989.

These standard errors may also be used to test the statistical significance of the difference between two sample statistics by pooling the standard errors of the two sample estimates. For example, the standard error of the difference in the percentage of women in jail for drug offenses in 1989 compared to 1983 would be 1.4 (or the square root of the sum of the squared standard errors in each year). Since the observed difference of 20.5% (33.6% minus 13.1%) is greater than 2.8%, the difference would be considered statistically significant.

All comparisons discussed in this report were statistically significant at the 95-percent confidence level. Because of the sample design, State, local, or other subnational estimates cannot be made.

#### *Self-reported information*

Criminal history data are based on self-reported information provided by each respondent. Through a series of questions, inmates were asked to report on past probation sentences as juveniles and as adults and on past sentences to incarceration up to 10 prior times. For each sentence, the inmates were asked the offenses for which they were sentenced, the type of institution in which they served time, the date of admission, and the length of time actually served. From this information, a criminal history profile was constructed.

A recidivist was defined as an inmate who reported a sentence to probation or incarceration at any time in the past.

Drug use and treatment history data are also based on responses from the inmates. Inmates were asked a detailed set of questions about each of 10 types of drugs. These drugs included heroin, methadone used outside of a treatment program, amphetamines and barbiturates (alone and in combination), cocaine or crack, LSD, PCP, and marijuana or hashish. Drug-use histories were developed by examining the responses to questions for each of these drugs. Inmates who were unconvicted (awaiting arraignment, awaiting trial, or on trial) were not asked any questions about drug use during the month before the arrest for which they were currently detained or about drug use in the month before the first offense for which they had served time in the past.

Tracy L. Snell wrote this report under the supervision of Allen J. Beck. Tom Hester edited the report. Craig A. Perkins and James J. Stephan provided statistical assistance. Marilyn Marbrook supervised production of the report, assisted by Betty Sherman, Yvonne Bostor, and Jayne Pugh. Data collection and processing were carried out at the Demographic Surveys Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census under the supervision of Lawrence S. McGinn and Gertrude Odom. Sample design and weighting were provided at the Statistical Methods Division, the Bureau of the Census, by Wendy Scholetsky and Deborah Fenstermaker.

NCJ-134732 March 1992

The Assistant Attorney General is responsible for matters of administration and management with respect to the OJP agencies: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office for Victims of Crime, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Assistant Attorney General establishes policies and priorities consistent with the statutory purposes of the OJP agencies and the priorities of the Department of Justice.

Data utilized in this report are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 1-800-999-0960. The dataset is archived as the Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, 1989 (ICPSR 9419).

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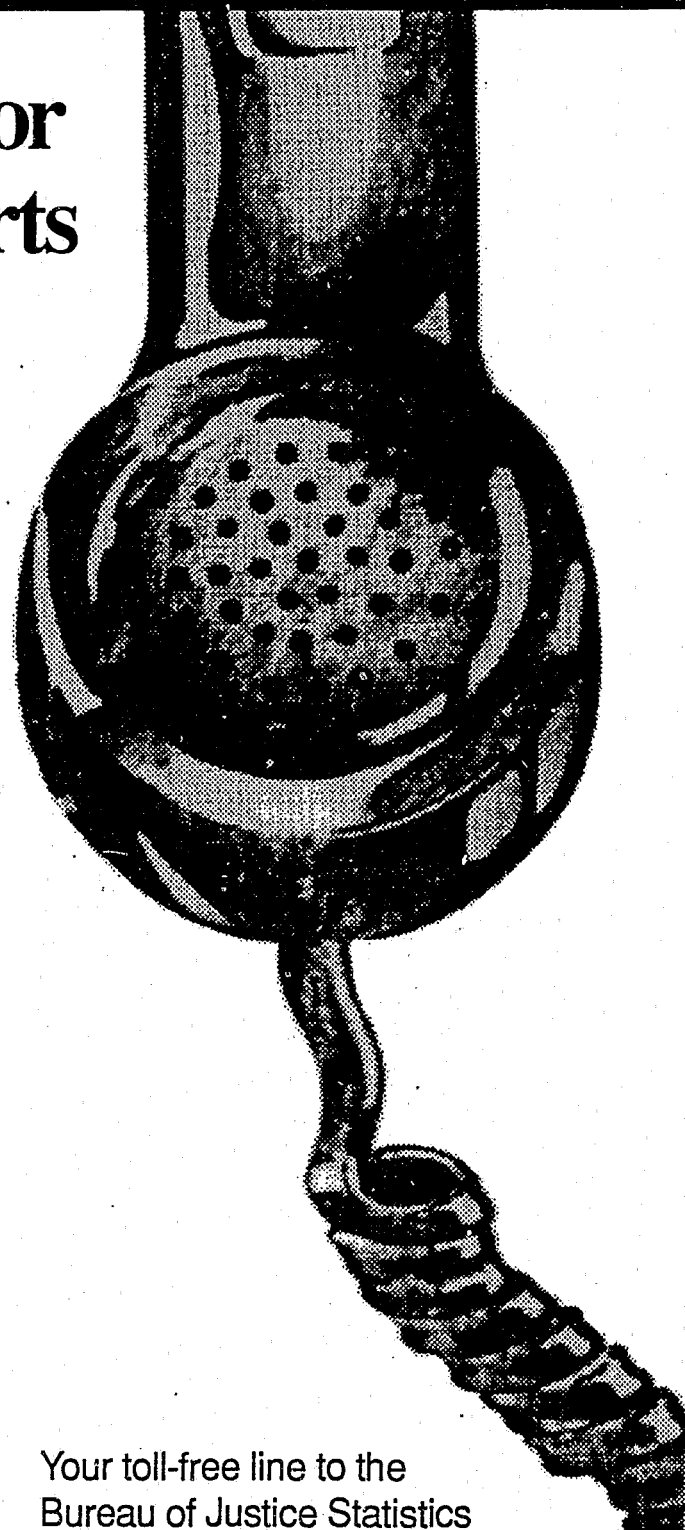
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