

**JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE (JRI)**

# Georgia

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Between 1990 and 2011, Georgia’s prison population more than doubled and was projected to grow 8 percent more by 2016 at a cost of \$264 million. With technical assistance through JRI, the state enacted HB 1176 in 2012 to address prison growth, improve public safety, and reduce costs. Still facing the highest probation rate in the country five years later, Georgia reengaged in JRI and passed targeted reforms through SB 174 in 2017.

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Through HB 1176 and SB 174, Georgia:

**Invested in Strategies to Reduce Recidivism and Expand Treatment Resources**

- Reinvested more than \$232 million in accountability courts, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment programs, and strategies to improve outcomes for people leaving prison

- Expanded accountability courts (e.g. drug, mental health, and veterans’ courts) to every judicial circuit

**Adjusted the Criminal Code to Align Penalties with the Severity of Each Offense**

- Adjusted sentences for burglary, forgery, theft, and drug possession based on the seriousness of the offense, decreasing sentence lengths for many less serious offenses and raising them for a few of the most serious ones

- Nearly eliminated the jail backlog (people awaiting transfer to prison)

**Strengthened and Streamlined Probation and Parole Supervision**

- Focused intensive supervision on those at high risk of reoffending, established a range of sanction options, and streamlined the process for moving people to unsupervised probation and early termination

- Decreased average probation caseload size nearly 25 percent between 2017 and 2018

- Between 2007 and 2016, saw a 35 percent decline in parole revocations and a 17 percent decline in probation revocations to prison

- Required judges to waive fines and fees for people on probation who are unable to pay them

**LASTING IMPACT OF JRI**

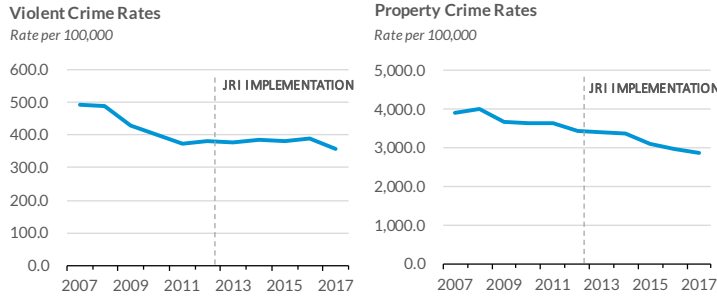
Georgia invested **millions of dollars** in accountability courts (e.g., drug, mental health, and veterans’ courts) and operated **156** across the state in 2018.

Recognizing their promise as an effective alternative to prison, particularly for people with substance use disorders and mental illness, Georgia has built a statewide system of accountability courts in part through JRI. The state now operates at least one in every judicial district and participation has increased from about 3,100 clients in FY 2013 to more than 9,700 in FY 2017. Through subsequent legislation, the state created a statewide Council of Accountability Court Judges to set and hold courts accountable to best practices and develop a data repository to support continuous quality improvements. The Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform estimates that managing cases through alternative courts has averted \$212 million in incarceration costs.

SAVINGS/REINVESTMENT	
Savings/averted costs	State JRI investment
\$264,000,000	\$232,922,006

**DATA TRENDS\***

## Violent and Property Crime Rates, 2007-17



Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting Program (2007-2017).

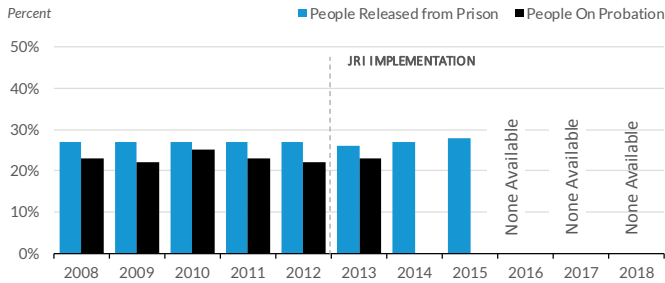


Violent crime was steady before JRI and remained relatively stable after reform.



Property crime was declining before JRI and continued to decline after reform.

## Recidivism Rate: Reconviction within Three Years



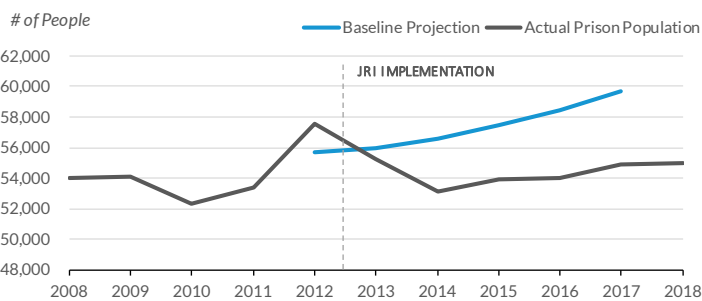
Source: Georgia Department of Corrections, 3 Year Felony Reconviction (Calendar Year).

Notes: Because of differences in the underlying populations, recidivism rates between people released from prison and those starting probation are not comparable. Rates include any felony reconviction within three years of release from prison or the start of probation.



Recidivism rates have remained steady for people released from prison and on probation.

## Prison Population



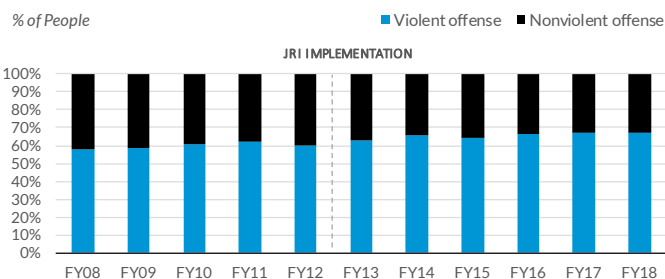
Source: Georgia Department of Corrections, Inmate Statistical Profile: All Active Inmates (July of given year).

Note: The baseline projection was calculated by Applied Research Services in 2011 and reflects the expected size of the prison population assuming no changes to policy or practice.



In 2017, there were approximately 5,000 fewer people in Georgia prisons than projected before reform.

## Prison Composition



Source: Georgia Department of Corrections, Inmate Statistical Profile: All Active Inmates (July of given year).

Notes: Refers to primary offense. The nonviolent category includes a number of people classified as "other." Violent includes all violent and sex offenses. Data does not include people whose primary offense was not reported (<3% of the population in any given year).



Georgia is focusing prison space on people convicted of serious offenses. In 2018, 67 percent of people in prison were there for a violent offense, up from 58 percent in 2008.

\*The data in this summary describe trends and provide additional context on system changes pre- and post-reform. Indicators shown here track high-level changes in state justice systems and do not necessarily demonstrate the impact of any specific reform, including JRI policy and practice changes. Visit [urbi.is/JRI](http://urbi.is/JRI) to see detailed sources for information in this fact sheet.