

## JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE (JRI)

# Louisiana

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Between 1985 and 2010, Louisiana’s prison population grew 267 percent and its corrections spending increased 400 percent. In 2010, it had the highest incarceration rate in the US. With technical assistance through JRI, Louisiana enacted several bills in 2011 to focus prison space on people convicted of serious and violent crimes and people at greater risk of recidivating, reduce recidivism, and curb corrections costs. Still facing the highest incarceration rate in the US five years later, Louisiana reengaged in JRI in 2016 and passed system improvements via legislation in 2017.

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Through legislation enacted during its 2011 and 2017 legislative sessions, Louisiana:

#### Focused Prison Resources on Serious and Violent Offenses by Reducing Sentences and Expanding Probation Eligibility for Less Serious Crimes

Modified sentencing laws, including reducing sentences for certain types of crime, raising the felony theft threshold, and eliminating certain types of property crime.

Modified penalty enhancements for people who previously committed crimes; as a result, the number of people convicted under the habitual offender statute decreased by roughly 75 percent between 2016 and 2018.

Expanded probation eligibility for people convicted of less serious offenses to encourage the use of probation in lieu of incarceration.

#### Strengthened Community Supervision

Authorized probation and parole officers to respond to supervision violations with administrative sanctions and decreased technical revocations more than 50 percent between 2016 and 2018.

Decreased maximum probation sentences from five to three years and decreased supervision caseloads 17 percent between 2016 and 2018, allowing officers to focus their time and resources on people who pose a greater risk to public safety.

Opened two additional day-reporting centers that offer services proven to reduce recidivism for people who are justice-involved.

### LASTING IMPACT OF JRI

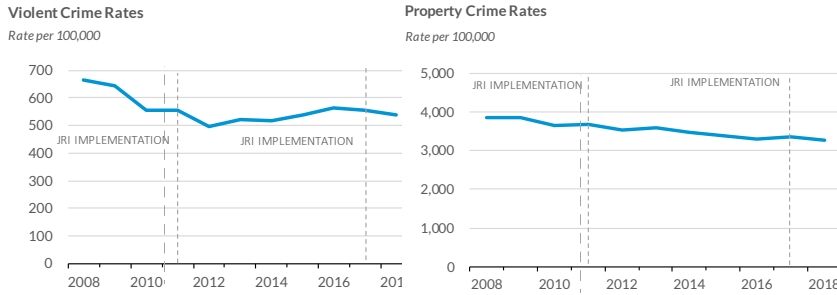
## Louisiana invested \$8.5 million in strategies to reduce recidivism and strengthen victims’ services.

Between 2017 and 2018, Louisiana’s prison population fell more than 7 percent and generated \$12.2 million in savings. The state reinvested 70 percent (\$8.5 million) of the savings in recidivism reduction and victims’ services. The Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections was allocated \$4.27 million from the first year of savings to reduce recidivism by improving programming for people housed in local jails, expanding and enhancing reentry services, and creating a transitional-housing pilot program. The department also distributed \$2.53 million in incentive grants to community groups working to expand alternatives to prison or improve and better coordinate reentry services. The Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement received \$1.7 million to bolster victims’ services and create a family justice center to help victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, human trafficking, and stalking; build a robust, statewide victim notification system; and reduce case backlogs at the Crime Victims Reparations Board. Implementation is underway but it is too early to report on the impact of these investments.

### SAVINGS/REINVESTMENT

2011 Savings/averted costs	2011 State JRI investment
\$17,249,098	\$1,700,000
2017 Savings/averted costs	2017 State JRI investment
\$30,003,333	\$24,663,233

## Violent and Property Crime Rates, 2008–18

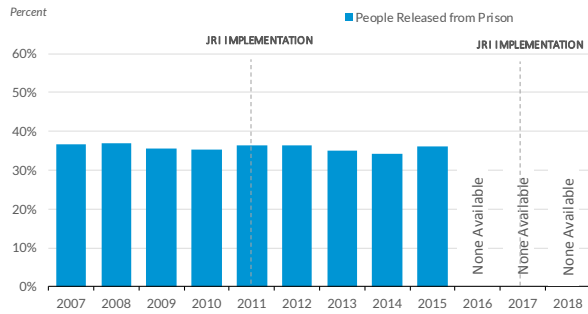


Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting Program (2008–2018).

↓ Violent crime was decreasing before Louisiana’s first JRI engagement and fluctuated thereafter.

↓ Property crime was steady before the first JRI engagement and decreased after reform.

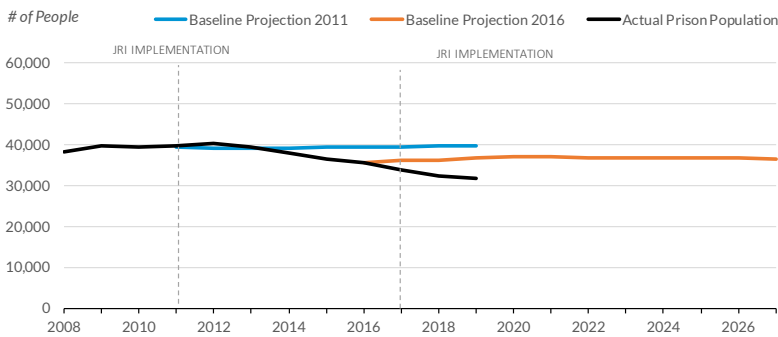
## Recidivism Rate: Reincarceration within Three Years



Source: Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections. Recidivism in Adult Corrections, June 30, 2019.

○ Recidivism rates remained steady among people released from prison between 2007 and 2015.

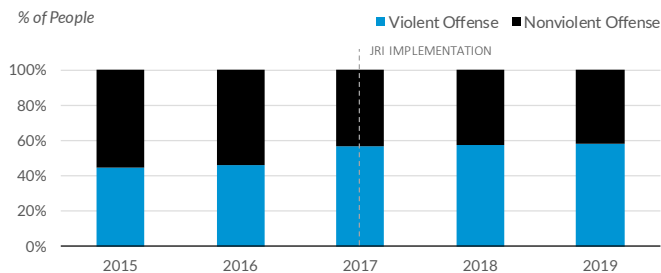
## Prison Population



Source: Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections Briefing Book, 2019 Population Trend, including full custody populations as of December of each year; JFA Institute calculated the baseline prison population projection.

↓ In 2019, there were approximately 5,000 fewer people in Louisiana prisons than projected in 2016.

## Prison Composition



Source: Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections Briefing Books, 2015-2019.  
Note: 2015-2018 are year-end data. 2019 data are as of June 30, 2019.

↑ Louisiana is focusing prison space on people convicted of serious offenses. In 2019, 58 percent of people in prison were there for a violent offense, up from 45 percent in 2015.

\*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 [urban.is/JRI](http://urban.is/JRI) to see detailed sources for information in this fact sheet.