

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE (JRI)

Arkansas

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Between FY 2004 and FY 2015, Arkansas’s state prison population increased 31 percent and was projected to grow 28 percent more by FY 2026. Moreover, the state’s corrections spending increased 68 percent from FY 2004 to FY 2015 and was projected to increase by another \$653 million by FY 2023. Facing prison facilities at capacity and county jails holding a growing number of people awaiting transfer to prison, Arkansas enacted Act 423 in March 2017 with technical assistance through JRI to prioritize supervision resources for people at greatest risk of reoffending, expand local behavioral health treatment and services, reduce recidivism, and increase public safety. Arkansas had previously engaged in JRI, passing Act 570 in 2011, but key provisions of the law were reversed in 2013, limiting its impact.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Through Act 423, Arkansas:

Improved Law Enforcement Responses to Behavioral Health Crisis Situations

Created statewide crisis intervention team training requirements for law enforcement agencies to help them respond effectively to and de-escalate behavioral health crises, connect people to crisis stabilization services rather than send them to jail, and protect public safety.

As of February 2019, every county and local law enforcement agency with at least 10 full-time officers had at least one officer who had received intensive crisis intervention training.

Strengthened Probation and Parole Supervision Practices

Established more effective and less costly sanctioning protocols for people on probation and parole by limiting incarceration to up to 90 days for technical violations, leading to a decrease in parole revocations to prison for technical violations.

Implemented a new Supervision Sanction Program in 2017 focused on behavior change, and saw a decline in revocations to prison for technical parole violations from 1,406 (July 2016 to June 2017) to 598 (October 2017 to August 2018).

LASTING IMPACT OF JRI

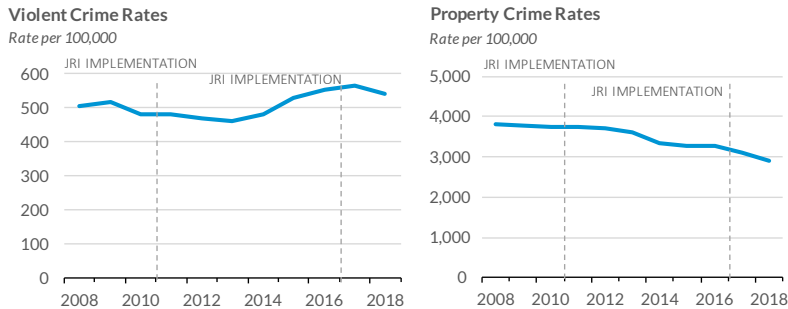
Through JRI, Arkansas has established crisis stabilization units (CSUs) throughout the state that provide a residential treatment alternative to jail for people experiencing behavioral health crises.

To support implementation of Act 423, the Arkansas state legislature dedicated \$5 million in the state budget to establish and operate four CSUs in Craighead County, Pulaski County, Sebastian County, and Washington County. These facilities provide a short-term inpatient alternative to jail for people who are arrested for nonviolent offenses and are experiencing mental health or substance use health crises. Rather than being placed in overcrowded county jails ill equipped to address their needs, people are referred to CSUs staffed by medical personnel. Arkansas’s CSUs aim to break the cycling of people in and out of jail by providing treatment and services to address the underlying drivers of crime, diminish jail overcrowding, and reduce recidivism and court caseloads. As of October 2019, all four CSUs were operational and were projected to provide care to approximately 4,800 people annually.

SAVINGS/ REINVESTMENT

Savings/averted costs	Reinvestment
Unknown	\$9,966,600

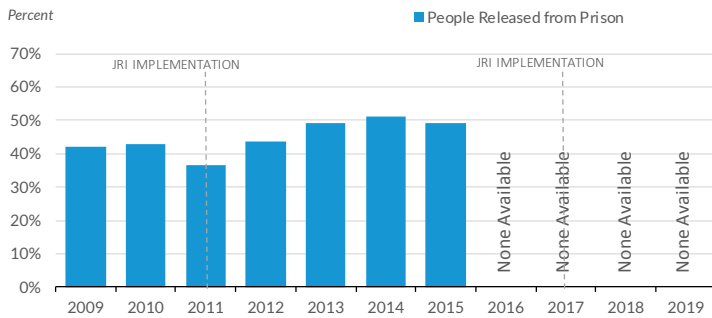
Violent and Property Crime Rates, 2008–18



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

- Violent crime was increasing before JRI and decreased after reform.
- Property crime rates were decreasing before JRI and continued decreasing after reform.

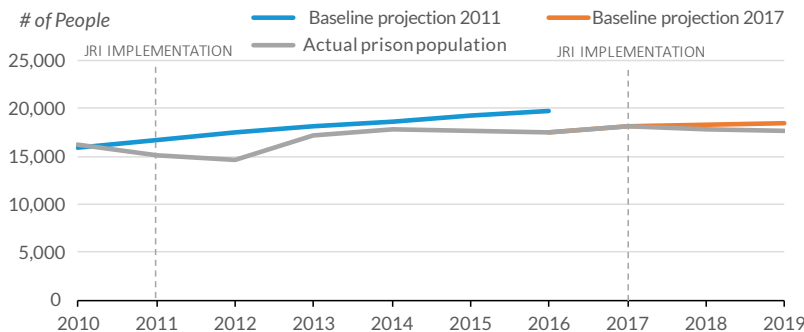
Recidivism: Reincarceration within Three Years



Source: Arkansas Department of Corrections Recidivism Study 2015 (Pine Bluff: Arkansas Department of Corrections, 2015).
Notes: Rates in 2009 and 2010 include people released from both the Arkansas Department of Corrections and Department of Community Corrections. Rates for 2011 through 2015 include only those released from DOC state prisons.

- Recidivism rates increased for people released from prison between 2009 and 2015.

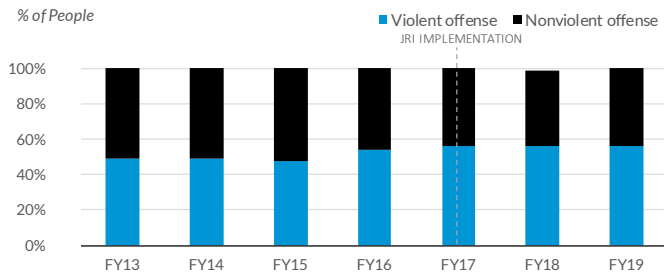
Prison Population



Source: Actual prison population from the Arkansas Department of Correction Annual Report FY 2018; Baseline projection 2011 from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative State Data Tracker; Baseline projection 2017 from the 2016 Arkansas Prison Projections and Historical Corrections Trends.

- In 2019, there were approximately 798 fewer people in Arkansas prisons than was projected prereform.

Prison Composition



Source: Arkansas Department of Correction Annual Report, FY 2018.

- Arkansas is increasingly prioritizing prison beds for the most serious offenses. In FY 2019, 56 percent of people in prison were there for a violent offense, up from 49 percent in FY 2013.

*The data in this summary describe trends and provide additional context on system changes pre- and postreform. 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 to see detailed sources for information in this fact sheet.