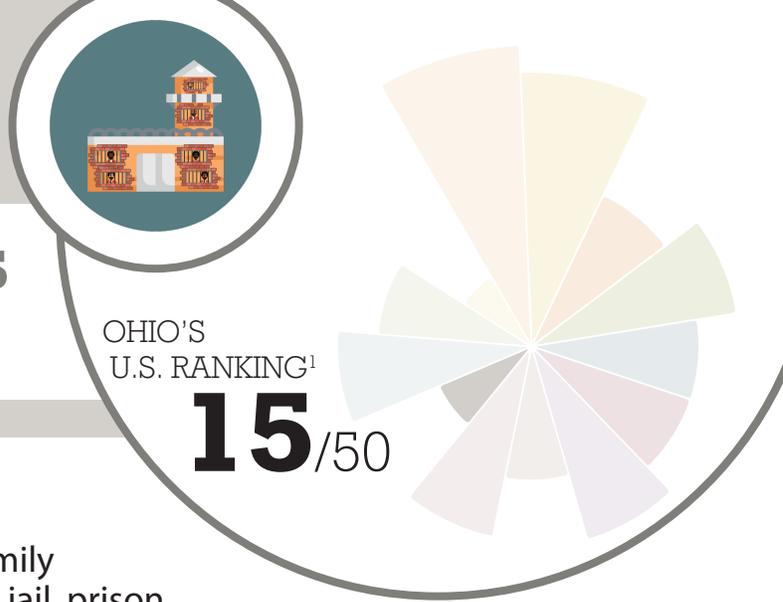


Imprisonment Rates Nonviolent Crimes



Ohio has the 15th highest incarceration rate in the country.¹ Incarceration has direct consequences for employment and also interrupts families when a family member is incarcerated. Incarceration ranging from jail, prison, parole, and probation have direct impacts on employment and financial security. In turn, financial security reduces stress and can help prevent intimate partner violence.

Statistics

Ohio's prison population has remained stable for the past decade even though the state has a broad continuum of community sanctions to place non-violent offenders.² And, although the crime rate has actually decreased over the past 20 years, overly harsh criminal justice policies have increased incarceration rates. Taking a closer look at Ohioans committed to Ohio's state prison system shows that 4th and 5th degree felons make up about 38% of intakes for 2018. Drug offenses constitute 27% of the 2018 commitments, property offenses represented an additional 9% and fraud constituted 2% of the 2018 commitments.²

The average sentence in months for Ohioans incarcerated for 4th and 5th degree felonies in 2018 is

14.29 months for males⁶
16.89 months for females⁶

When looking at disparities between black Ohioans and white Ohioans, Ohio ranks 22nd in the nation with Black/White disparity of 5.6 Black people compared to one white person imprisoned per 100,000 population.³ The Hispanic/White Ohioan disparity is 1.9 Hispanic people compared to one white person imprisoned per 100,000 population making Ohio 14th in the US for this disparity.⁴ Moreover, the percentage of women incarcerated in Ohio has steadily increased over the past 20 years with women representing 12% of the commitments in 1999, 13% in 2009 and 14% in 2018.⁵ With the average age of incarceration being about 34 years of age, that means many of the people incarcerated in Ohio are incarcerated during their early employment years.

Trends: Commitments to ODRC for Drugs, Property & Fraud by Gender

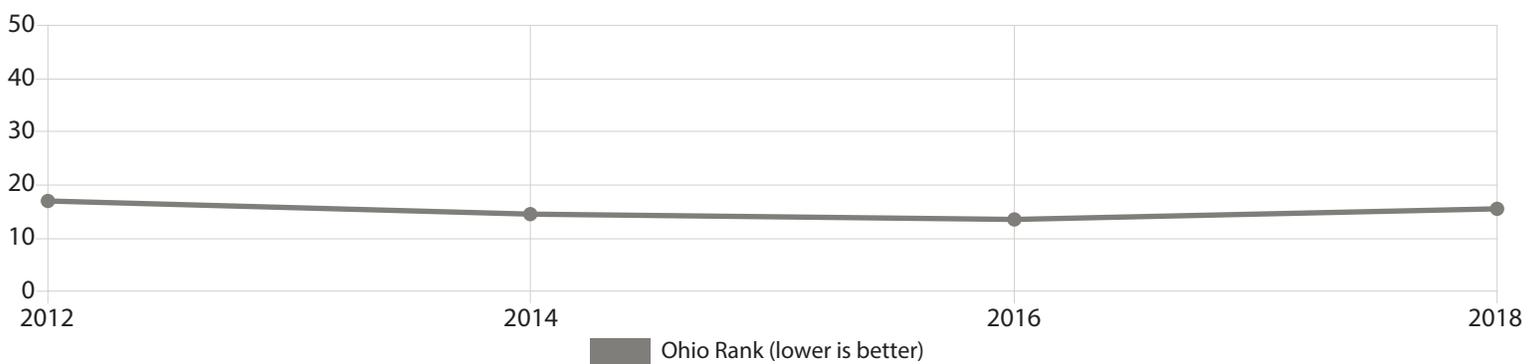
Year	Drugs			Property			Fraud		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2012	81.8%	18.2%	24.3%	82.3%	17.7%	13.9%	67.9%	32.1%	2.01%
2014	80.3%	19.7%	26.5%	80.1%	19.9%	12.9%	67.8%	32.2%	1.9%
2016	78.4%	21.6%	28.2%	79.2%	20.8%	11.5%	72.0%	27.9%	2.4%
2018	79.7%	20.3%	27.0%	80.0%	20.0%	8.4%	77.3%	22.7%	2.0%

NOTE: The offenses are for the highest level conviction for the ODRC commitments for each of the reporting years. Offenses reflected in table include only felony 4 & 5 offenses within each of the offense types. Ranking is based on all prisoners in federal and state prisons for all ages. Arson was removed from property offenses because it is considered a violent offense.

Barriers

- Several criminal justice policies have increased incarceration rates for Ohioans (including the three strikes, mandatory minimums and drug/gun policies) and removed them from the employment market.
- Cash bail policies place extreme burdens on low income Ohioans. Pre-trial jail for unpaid bail has consequences for employees who already face economic hardship. For those who cannot afford bail, the time spent in jail can cost them their job.
- Both public and private employers use background checks in Ohio.⁷ Many employers will not hire felons so any felony conviction and especially one where incarceration is the sentence interrupt employment opportunities.

Ohio US Imprisonment Ranking



Remedies

- Ohio needs to continue to promote sentencing reform. The Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission continues to study the impacts of the various reforms to promote data driven decision making.
- Abolish mandatory minimums as they increase prison population and incarcerate people unnecessarily, which has long term consequences for the employment opportunities of those released from prison.
- Extend community sanctions beyond county borders so that those counties that do not have the full range of community sanctions can benefit from nearby sanctions if residential sanctions are needed.
- Use other types of community sanctions coupled with rehabilitative/supportive services that get to the root cause of the offense for those who are truly non-violent. Many offenders imprisoned for low level felonies are in need of substance abuse treatment and mental health treatment, which have been shown to be more effective when offenders are sentenced to community controls.⁸
- Ban the box legislation, also known as HB 56, prohibits public employers from asking for information about an applicant's felony convictions at the time the application is submitted.⁹ The public and employers need more education on HB 56 so they understand their rights and responsibilities regarding job applications and hiring. Ban the box could be extended to private employers with similar restrictions as public employers to promote more employment opportunities, while still protecting vulnerable populations.

