

Data Dashboards Documentation

Welcome to the California Prison Population Data Dashboards. This project is a collaboration between the [Committee on Revision of the Penal Code](#) and the [California Policy Lab](#).

This documentation provides information on our data source, guidance on exploring the dashboards, and details to help interpret the data.

If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Thomas Nosewicz, Legal Director, Committee on Revision of the Penal Code at tnosewicz@clrc.ca.gov.

Data Source

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) provides data to the Committee on Revision of the Penal Code about people currently in prison custody and people who have been admitted and released over time. The California Policy Lab compiled these data to create these dashboards.

Comparisons to CDCR's Population Data Points Dashboards

Some numbers on the California Prison Population Data Dashboards differ from those on the [CDCR Population Data Points Dashboard](#). These differences are because of variances in our methodological approaches.

In particular:

- The population count in the Current Population Dashboard is 131 (0.15%) fewer people than the count shown in CDCR's Population Data Points Dashboards. The current population indicated in this dashboard will always be different from CDCR's count because CDCR publishes a monthly average population count, while this dashboard publishes a count as of the final day of the month.
- The most recent annual totals of admissions and releases as published in the CDCR Population Data Points Dashboards are typically slightly higher than the totals published on the CPL dashboards; this is due to the fact that population totals, especially recent monthly admission totals, can change slightly following CPL's receipt of CDCR data. For recent release months, the CPL dashboard is usually within 99% of the total of CDCR's dashboard.
- The count of people with a violent offense is higher than in CDCR's Population Data Points Dashboard because we include all people with violent offenses in this category. CDCR splits this group into people they classify as "serious and violent" and those classified only as "violent." When these two groups are added together, our violent count is very similar to CDCR's count.

There may be other differences between these dashboards and CDCR's Population Data Points Dashboards. We continue to work closely with CDCR to resolve these differences and will update the dashboards over time.

Exploring the Dashboards

On our main page, you will find three dynamic data dashboards — “Current Population,” “Admissions,” and “Releases.”

- The first dashboard (“Current Population”) includes people currently incarcerated in prison in June 2026.
- The second dashboard (“Admissions”) shows data for people admitted to CDCR from 2015 through 2025.
- The third dashboard (“Releases”) shows data for people released from CDCR from 2015 through 2025.

We refer to these data dashboards as dynamic because they allow users to explore the data. When you arrive at the first dashboard page showing information on the current population, the dashboard will show data for all people in CDCR custody. From there, you choose how to navigate the data. For example, you may be interested in narrowing to view data only for people incarcerated in a specific county or for a specific offense category – or both.

Each data visualization allows you to filter the data by selecting the subgroup you are most interested in viewing. For example, you can select a county of interest by clicking on the county filter and checking the box for that county (e.g. Alameda County). When you make this selection, the entire dashboard changes to only show data for people sentenced to prison from this county. If you then would like to select a subset of people sentenced for property offenses, you would click on the data bar that represents that offense category (e.g. property). After making this selection, the entire dashboard will change again to reflect only data for people sentenced to prison in Alameda County for property offenses. To return to the full population, unselect those filters by either unchecking the box (as in the case of the county filter), clicking the data bar a second time (as in the case of the offense bar chart), selecting the “Reset view” button  at the bottom of the dashboard, or selecting “Reset All Filters” near the top of the dashboard.

Note, in some cases you will filter down to a point that the number of people in a category is too small to display the data. For this public-facing dashboard, we do not display data for any group that includes less than 10 people and instead display a “small sample.” Where there are no people within a particular subgroup, you will see a blank display for that variable.

Interpreting the Data

This final section provides descriptions of the data elements included in the Current Population, Admissions, and Releases dashboards. These dashboards include information only on people who were physically admitted to CDCR, even if for only a small amount of time. People who received a prison sentence but served the entirety of it in county jail are not included.

Time & Place

- **County:** All dashboards include a filter for the county in which the person was sentenced in California. If the admission includes convictions from multiple counties, the county that

imposed the longest sentence will be reported. By default, all counties are selected and the dashboards show data for the full state population. Change the selection to a single county or a group of counties using the “County” filter checkboxes.

- **Year:** The Admissions and Releases dashboards allow you to view changes in the population over time. By default the full period of available data is shown. Slide the year filter bar to select a single year or a range of years. Note, admission counts drop off and releases increase in 2020, as admissions to prison were suspended for a period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there were a series of emergency releases.

Demographic Characteristics

- **Age:** All dashboards include a categorical age variable grouping the population into the following three categories: under 26, 26 to 49, and over 49. The Current Population dashboard includes current age, while the Admissions dashboard includes age at admission and the Releases dashboard includes age at release. Click on the data bar for any age group to explore the characteristics of that subgroup.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** All dashboards include the following racial and/or ethnic groups: American Indian/Alaska Native, API (Asian and Pacific Islander), Black, Hispanic, White, and an Other category for cases in which race/ethnicity is unknown or is not represented by these groups. API is inclusive of the CDCR race categories Asian, Pacific Islander, and Asian or Pacific Islander, and the CDCR ethnic affiliations Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, and Pacific Islander. This race/ethnicity information in the dashboards reflects the data provided by CDCR and may be inconsistent with other data sources or how individuals would self-identify. Click on the data bar for any racial or ethnic group to explore the characteristics of that subgroup.

For comparison, the California population as a whole has the following racial/ethnic composition: 1.7% American Indian/Alaska Native, 17% API, 6.5% Black, 40.4% Hispanic, and 34.3% White ([2023 Census](#)).

- **Sex:** All dashboards include a sex categorization as either female or male. As with race/ethnicity information, sex is administratively assigned rather than self-reported by people in prison. This variable does not reflect gender identity. Click on the data bar for female or male to explore the characteristics of that subgroup.

Offense & Sentence Characteristics

- **Offense Category:** All dashboards include the offense category based on the controlling (or most serious) offense for an admission to CDCR. The offense category options are person, property, drug, or other offense. By default, all offense categories are shown in the dashboards. You can click on the data bar for any offense category to explore the characteristics of that subgroup.
- **Offense Group:** All dashboards include the offense group based on the controlling (or most serious) offense for an admission to CDCR. The offense group options include

more detailed information about the nature of the controlling offense than the offense category. The offense group combines underlying related specific criminal offenses — for example the “Robbery” offense group includes first and second-degree and attempted robberies. [This spreadsheet](#) shows the specific offenses by code section included within each of the offense groups. The dashboards show the frequency distribution of these offense groups, with the most frequent offense groups appearing as larger boxes. Hover over smaller boxes without a title to see the name of that offense group. Click on the data box for any offense group to explore the characteristics of that subgroup. Acronyms are used for some offense groups to save space, including: Assault with a Deadly Weapon (AWD), Controlled Substance (CS) offenses, and Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

- **Serious:** All dashboards include information on the share of people incarcerated in prison for a serious offense, as defined in [Penal Code § 1192.7\(c\)](#). If you click on the data bar under “Serious Felony” the dashboard will display only people incarcerated for a serious offense. Note, the serious and the violent indicators are mutually exclusive in the dashboards. If a person is in prison for a violent offense, they will not be included in the share with serious offenses although many violent offenses are also serious.
- **Violent:** All dashboards include information on the share of people incarcerated in prison for a violent offense, as defined in [Penal Code § 667.5\(c\)](#). If you click on the data bar under “Violent Felony” the dashboard will only display people incarcerated for a violent offense. Note, the serious and the violent indicators are mutually exclusive in the dashboards.

Note that the law defining serious or violent offenses has changed over time. An offense’s classification reflects whether it was violent or serious at the time of the offense, not whether it is violent or serious now. For example, all robberies are currently violent offenses, but this has only been true since 2000 (before that, a smaller subset of robberies were considered “violent”).

Sentence, Time Served & Length of Stay

- **Average Sentence:** The Current Population and Admissions dashboards (but not the Releases dashboard) include a variable that calculates the average sentence for the population. By default, the average sentence is calculated for all people included in the dashboard. However, selecting a subgroup of people, will recalculate the average sentence for people in that subgroup. Note, for people with an indeterminate life sentence, such as 15-to-life, the minimum term (e.g. 15 years) is used as the sentence length. For other long determinate sentences (e.g. 100 years), sentences to life without parole, and death sentences, we use a sentence length of 60 years when calculating the average sentence.
- **Sentence Length:** The Admissions dashboard includes a variable showing the distribution of sentence lengths for those admitted to CDCR. The variable includes the following sentence length groups: 2 years or less, 2–3 years, 3–4 years, 4–5 years, and

more than 5 years. If you click on the data bar for a specific sentence length group the dashboard will only display people admitted to CDCR with a sentence in that range.

- **Average Time Served:** The Current Population dashboard includes a variable reflecting the average time served so far for any group. Time served includes time served in prison and jail, as well as additional time credits. The measure of time served does not include good conduct, milestone or educational credits. By default, the average time served is calculated for all people included in the dashboard. However, selecting a subgroup of people will recalculate the average time served for people in that subgroup.
- **Average Length of Stay:** The Releases dashboard includes a variable reflecting the average length of stay in CDCR. Length of stay includes time spent in prison only and does not include time spent in jail. By default, the average length of stay is calculated for all people included in the dashboard. However, selecting a subgroup of people will recalculate the average stay for people in that subgroup.
- **Length of Stay:** The Releases dashboard includes a variable showing the distribution of the length of stay in prison for those released from prison. It does not include length of stay in jail. The variable includes the following length of stay groups: 6 months or less, 6 to 12 months, 12 to 24 months, 24 to 36 months, or more than 36 months. If you click on the data bar for a specific length of stay group the dashboard will only display people released from prison with a length of stay in that range.

Enhancement Characteristics

There are many different types of sentence enhancements that may be charged under California law. The enhancements included in the dashboard were selected because they are the most commonly imposed. The enhancement counts include both active enhancements and stayed enhancements (which do not add any time to a sentence). People may have more than one enhancement on their sentence and may be counted in more than one category of the Enhancements data.

Please see this [fact sheet](#) for more information about the range of enhancements that are applied at sentencing in California. For additional information on second and third strike enhancements, please see [this report](#). For additional information on the 5 year nickel prior, see [fact sheet](#).

Click on the data bar under any of the enhancement categories listed below, and it will display information for the subgroup of people with that enhancement on their sentence.

- **Any Enhancement:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with any enhancement on their sentence.
- **Second Strike:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a second-strike enhancement [PC667(e)(1)] on their sentence. In general, a “second strike” doubles the length of any felony sentence if the person has a prior conviction for a serious or violent offense. People who have a second-strike enhancement are excluded

from this group if they meet any of the following criteria: if they are serving a life without parole sentence, a condemned sentence, or an indeterminate (“life”) sentence (including for a third strike).

- **Third Strike:** All dashboards show counts of people with a third strike enhancement [PC667(e)(2)] who received a life sentence due to their third strike enhancement and who would not have otherwise received a life sentence. In general, a “third strike” imposes a 25-to-life sentence for a current serious or violent conviction if the person also has two prior serious or violent convictions. This is not a count of all individuals with a third strike enhancement, however. In some cases, people who received a third strike were also sentenced to terms that were longer than the “25-to-life” third strike sentence, such as “life without the possibility of parole.” These individuals would not be counted in the “third strike” count, nor would individuals whose base sentence was already a life sentence without the third strike, or individuals who received offense enhancements with life sentences. This is a replication of CDCR business rules used to produce the “Third Striker” count in CDCR’s [Population Data Points Dashboard](#) and is intended to indicate the number of individuals who are serving life sentences solely because of a third strike enhancement.
- **Deadly Weapon:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with an enhancement for the use of a deadly weapon [PC12022(b)]. This enhancement generally adds one year to a sentence.
- **Firearm: 10-20-life (10):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a 10-year firearm enhancement [PC12022.53(b)]. This enhancement can be added to sentences for specified felonies if a person uses a firearm during the offense.
- **Firearm: 10-20-life (20):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a 20-year firearm enhancement [PC12022.53(c)]. This enhancement can be added to sentences for specified felonies if a person discharges a firearm during the offense.
- **Firearm: 10-20-life (life):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a life term firearm enhancement [PC12022.53(d)]. This enhancement adds 25-to-life to sentences for specified felonies if a person discharges a firearm and proximately causes great bodily injury during the offense.
- **Firearm: Armed (1 or 3):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with an enhancement for being armed with a firearm [PC12022(a)]. This enhancement generally adds one year to a sentence for anyone who is armed with a firearm during the commission of a felony.
- **Firearm: Use (3,4,10):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with an enhancement for using a firearm [PC12022.5(a)]. This enhancement generally adds 3, 4, or 10 years to a sentence for anyone who uses a firearm during the commission of a felony.

- **Gang:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a gang enhancement [PC186.22(b)(1)]. The gang enhancement ranges from two years to a life sentence, depending on the underlying offense.
- **GBI:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a Great Bodily Injury (GBI) enhancement [PC12022.7(a)]. This enhancement adds three years to a sentence for any person who personally inflicts great bodily injury during a felony.
- **GBI (DV):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a Great Bodily Injury (GBI) enhancement under circumstances involving domestic violence (DV) [PC12022.7(e)]. This enhancement ranges from three to five years.
- **Nickel Prior:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with the five year “nickel prior” enhancement. [PC667(a)(1)]. This enhancement adds five years to the sentence for a “serious” felony offense if the person has a prior conviction for a serious offense.
- **Offense on Bail:** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with an enhancement for committing an offense while released on bail [PC12022.1]. This enhancement adds two years to a sentence.
- **Prior Prison Term (1yr):** All dashboards show the share of people incarcerated in prison with a 1-year enhancement for a prior prison term [667.5(b)]. Note that this enhancement was [largely repealed](#) effective in 2020 and people currently in prison with this enhancement are [eligible for resentencing](#) to address whether the enhancement should be removed.

Last updated: Aug 10, 2026

Update Log

August 10, 2026 updates:

- Modified definition of third strikers to exclude some habitual offenders.
- Modified definition of third strikers to exclude some stayed offenses.
- Expanded population sample to account for in-custody deaths and individuals in custody via the civil addict program.