

383.754

A State-by-State Look at Coronavirus in Prisons

The Marshall Project is collecting data on COVID-19 infections in state and federal prisons. See how the virus has affected correctional facilities where you live.

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By THE MARSHALL PROJECT

Since March, [The Marshall Project has been tracking](#) how many people are being sickened and killed by COVID-19 in prisons across the country and within each state. Here, we will regularly update the numbers of people infected and killed both nationwide and within each prison system until the crisis abates.

This reporting was undertaken in partnership with The Associated Press.

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Cases

By Feb. 23, at least 383,754 people in prison had tested positive for the illness, about a 1 percent increase from the week before.

New infections in prisons have dropped in recent weeks, from their highest peaks in mid-December to numbers not seen since October.

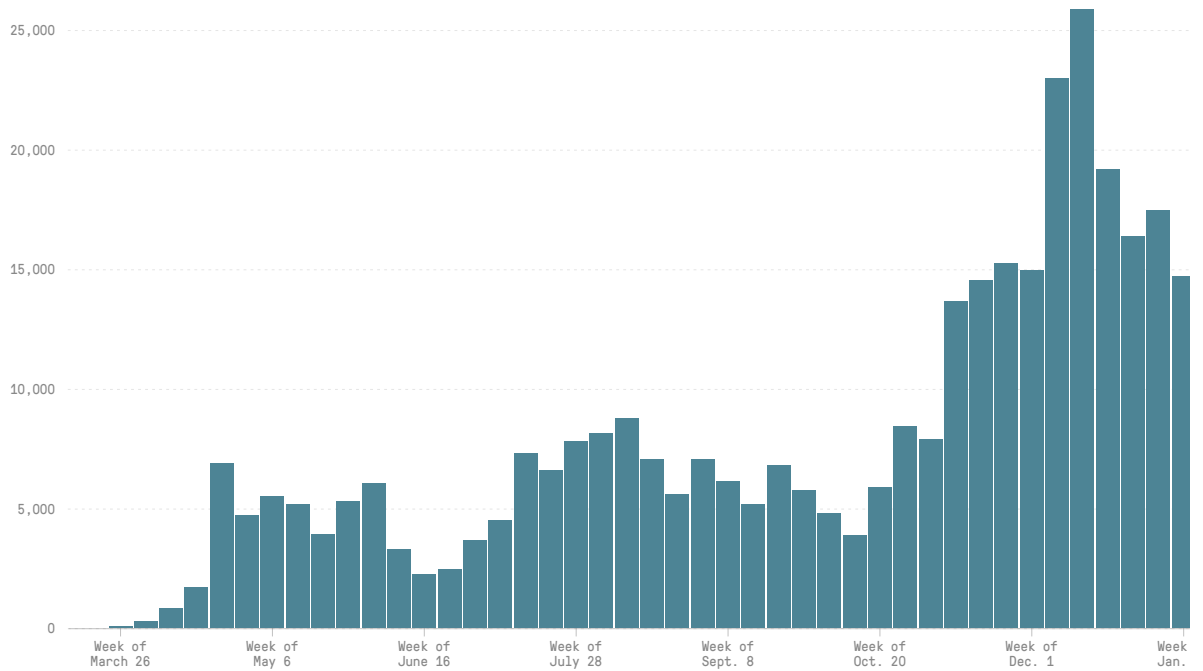
Reported cases first peaked in late April, when states such as Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee [began mass testing of prisoners](#). Those initiatives suggested that the coronavirus had been circulating among people without symptoms in much greater numbers than previously known.

There have been at least

383,754 cases

of coronavirus reported among prisoners.

307,363 prisoners have recovered.



STATE	TOTAL CASES ▼	PER 10,000 PRISONERS	NEW CASES OVER TIME
Federal	49,144	2,856	
California	49,036	4,168	
Texas	33,980	2,425	
Michigan	25,190	6,598	
Florida	17,876	1,906	
Arizona	11,932	2,817	
Arkansas	11,033	6,304	
Wisconsin	10,839	4,595	
Illinois	10,651	2,884	
Pennsylvania	9,520	2,045	

[See all states](#)

* An asterisk denotes state counts that include both pre-trial detainees and sentenced prisoners under a unified system of jails and prisons.

Source: The Marshall Project and Associated Press weekly data collection from state and federal prison agencies. [Download our data.](#)

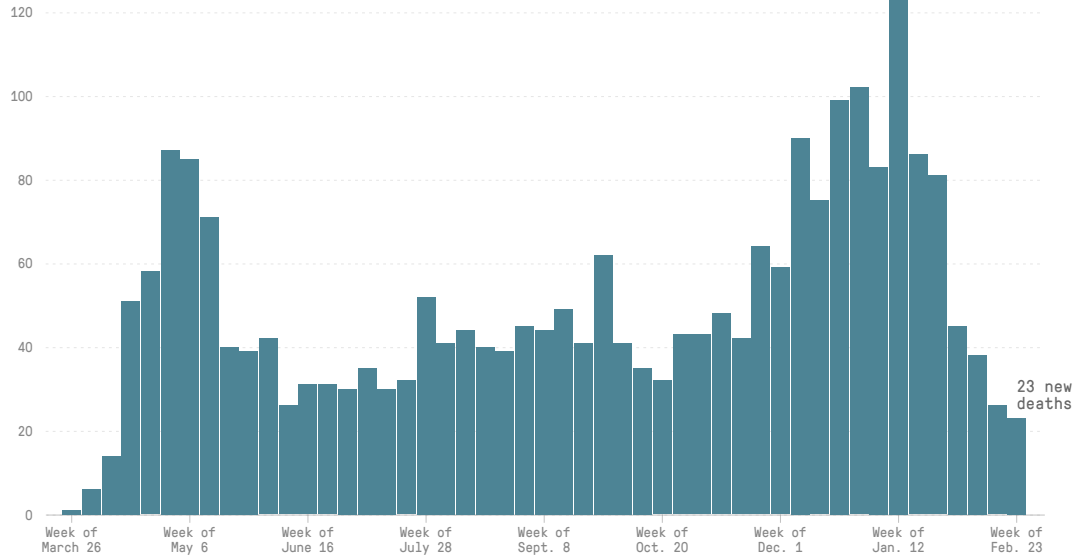
Deaths

The first known COVID-19 death of a prisoner was in Georgia when Anthony Cheek died on March 26. Cheek, who was 49 years old, had been held in Lee State Prison near Albany, a hot spot for the disease. Since then, at least 2,445 other prisoners have died of coronavirus-related causes. The week of Feb. 23, the number of deaths reported rose 1 percent from the previous week. COVID-19 has killed prisoners in most systems. Only one state—Vermont—has yet to report the death of a prisoner attributed to COVID-19.

There have been at least

2,446 deaths

from coronavirus reported among prisoners.



STATE	TOTAL DEATHS ▼	PER 10,000 PRISONERS	NEW DEATHS OVER TIME
Federal	236	14	
California	210	18	
Florida	208	22	
Texas	187	13	
Michigan	138	36	
Ohio	134	27	
Pennsylvania	97	21	
Georgia	89	16	
Illinois	87	24	
Alabama	61	29	

[See all states](#)

* An asterisk denotes state counts that include both pre-trial detainees and sentenced prisoners under a unified system of jails and prisons.

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What's happening in your state

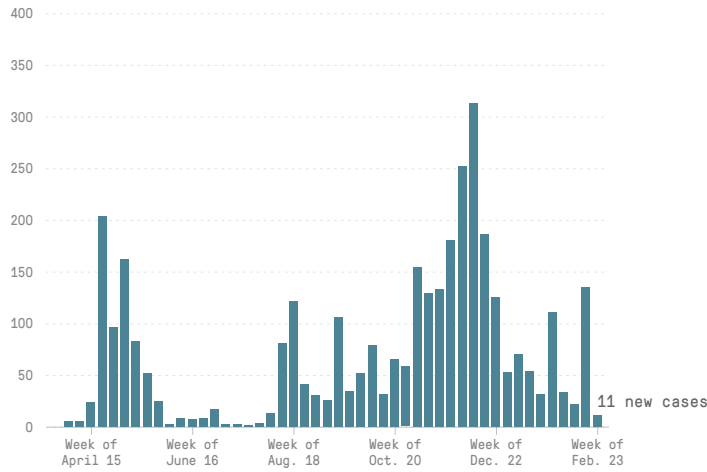
Given the huge differences in how many people are being tested in prisons for the virus, the effects of the pandemic have varied widely between different state prison systems. The first reported cases began popping up in Massachusetts and Georgia on March 20. In August, Hawaii, the last system whose prisoners had not gotten sick, reported its first confirmed cases of COVID-19. Here, you can choose to view the data for any state prison system and see how the numbers compare. For a summary of the number of cases in facilities run by the federal Bureau of Prisons, choose the "Federal" option.

There have been at least

3,435 cases

of coronavirus reported among prisoners in Indiana.

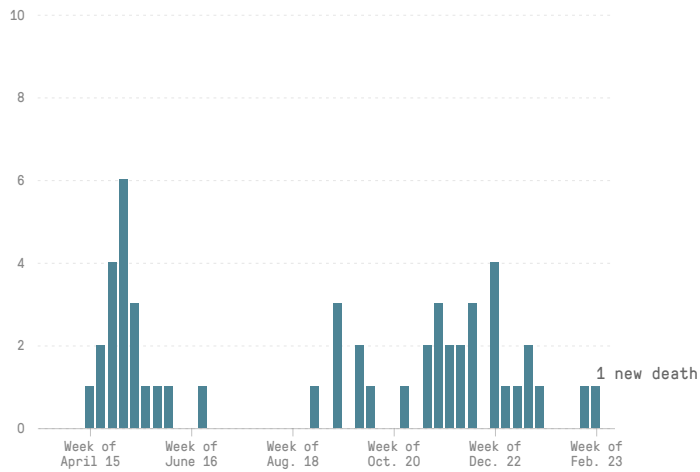
3,363 prisoners have recovered.



There have been at least

51 deaths

from coronavirus reported among prisoners in Indiana.



1 in 8

prisoners has tested
positive

1.3 times the rate in Indiana
overall

1 in 528

prisoners has died

About the same as Indiana
overall

452

tests were administered in
the past week

1.7 tests per 100 prisoners

Indiana's Department of Correction, starting with our Feb. 2 update, began to remove extra counts of incarcerated people who recovered from coronavirus more than once. Previous weeks' data may have included the same person more than once in the recovered figures. The department also reports coronavirus testing data for three juvenile facilities. For consistency of comparison with other state prison systems, we removed them from the data prior to July 28.

Testing data represents the number of tests administered, not the number of individuals who have been tested. Some states do not report tests until results have returned, which may create a delay in test counts.

Sources: The Marshall Project and Associated Press weekly data collection from state and federal prison agencies, The COVID Tracking Project [Download our data.](#)

Prison staff

While we know more about how prisoners are getting sick, another group of people is also at risk in these facilities: correctional officers, nurses, chaplains, wardens and other workers. We know little about how the coronavirus is affecting them, though they have the potential to carry it both into facilities and back out to their communities. It's difficult to assess how prison workers are being affected because many aren't being systematically tested.

In the most recent week, 13 states—Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia—released information on the number of their staff members tested for the coronavirus. Where we do know about positive cases, most state corrections departments stress that the count includes only the employees who voluntarily report a diagnosis, often in the course of calling out sick.

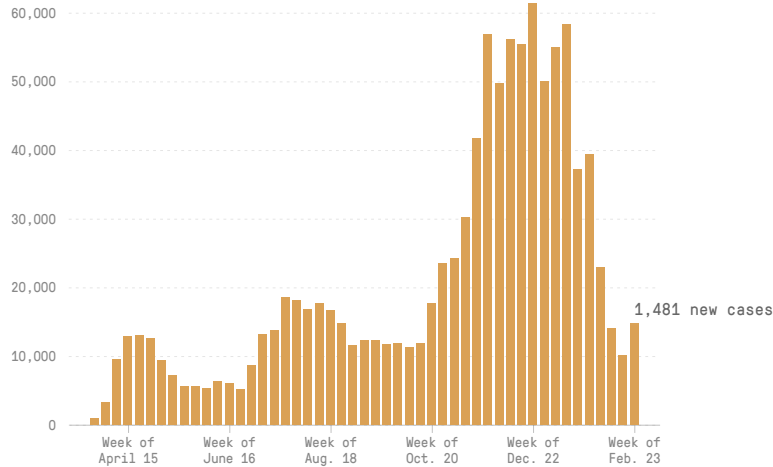
Since the start of the pandemic, more than 104,278 prison staff members have tested positive—with new cases at an all-time high the week of Dec. 22. Testing information for staff remains spotty in most states. Prisons have publicly reported 189 deaths among staff.

There have been at least

104,278 cases

of coronavirus reported among prison staff.

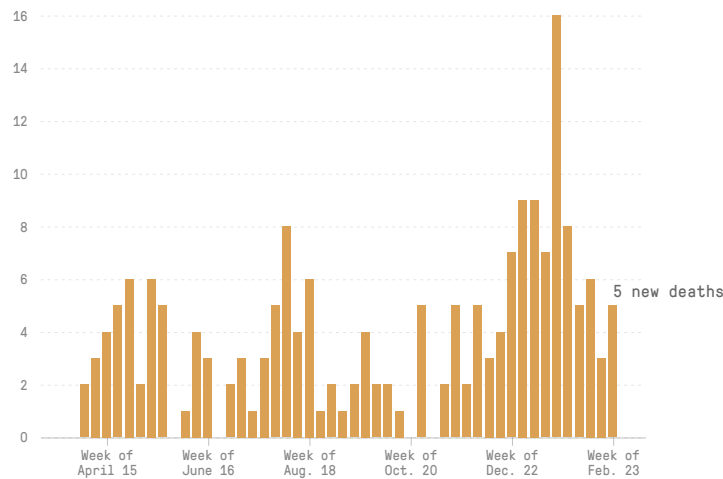
77,597 staff have recovered.



There have been at least

189 deaths

from coronavirus reported among prison staff.



The staff members in your state

We know very little about how many staff are tested, and in many states, it's not clear how many people are working in prisons right now. What we do know is that in several states, prison employees began to get sick before the people they oversee did. Using this tool, you can view the data for any state's prison system and see how the numbers compare. For a summary of the

number of cases in facilities administered by the federal Bureau of Prisons, choose the “Federal” option.

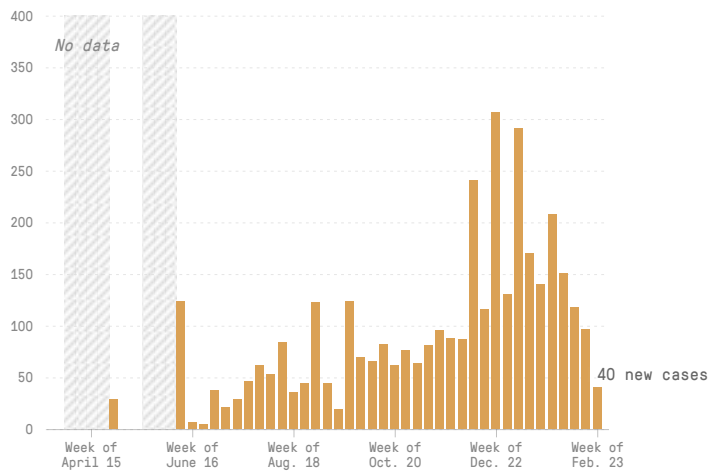
North Carolina ▾

There have been at least

3,652 cases

of coronavirus reported among staff in North Carolina.

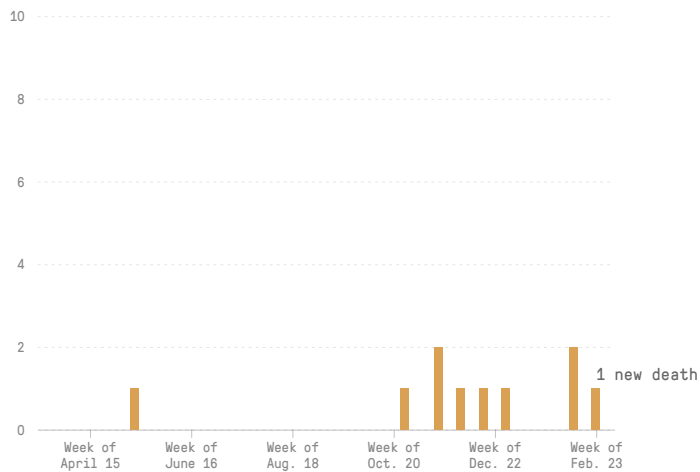
3,372 staff have recovered.



There have been at least

10 deaths

from coronavirus reported among staff in North Carolina.



The Marshall Project will continue to track and publish data on the coronavirus in our prison systems. If you have updates to the data to share or other comments, please contact us at info+covidtracker@themarshallproject.org.

We are publishing the raw data we have collected at [data.world](#), in partnership with The Associated Press, and [on GitHub](#). You can download the data to examine for yourself or to use in your research. If you do use our data, please [let us know](#). **hl**

Methodology

Since March 26, reporters from The Marshall Project and The Associated Press have been collecting data on COVID-19 tests administered to people incarcerated in all state and federal prisons, as well as the staff in those facilities. We request this data every week from state departments of corrections and the federal Bureau of Prisons; however, not all departments provide data for the date requested. These numbers have been grouped by the week the data was collected.

For six states with unified prison and jail systems—Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Vermont—we count testing and case numbers from both detainees awaiting trial and sentenced prisoners. Similarly, in Maryland, several pretrial facilities in Baltimore City are included in the figures.

To estimate the rate of infection among prisoners, we collected population data for each prison system before the pandemic, roughly in mid-March, and in April and June and each month since then. Beginning the week of July 28, we updated all prisoner population numbers, reflecting the number of incarcerated adults in state or federal prisons. Before that, population figures may have included additional populations, such as prisoners housed in other facilities, which were not captured in our COVID-19 data. In states with unified prison and jail systems, we include both detainees awaiting trial and sentenced prisoners.

We calculate the rates of infection and death to allow for the easiest comparison across prison systems. Because population snapshots do not account for movement in and out of prisons since March, and because many systems have significantly slowed the number of new people being sent to prison, it's difficult to estimate the total number of people who have been held since March. To be conservative, we calculate our rates of infection using the largest prisoner population snapshots we had during this period.

The overall U.S. rate of infection was calculated using case counts from [The COVID Tracking Project](#) and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Corrections departments in Indiana, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota and Wisconsin report COVID-19 testing and case data for juvenile facilities; West Virginia reports figures for juvenile facilities and jails. For consistency of comparison with other state prison systems, we removed those facilities from our data that were included before July 28. Pennsylvania's COVID-19 data included testing and cases for those who had been released on parole. We removed these tests and cases for prisoners before July 28 from the data. The staff cases remain. Until early November, West Virginia's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation did not disaggregate its staff numbers by type of facility. After they began providing itemized numbers on staff cases on Nov. 3, we only included staff numbers from prisons and work release sites. We have gone back to past weeks and estimated the staff breakdown based on the total number of staff in each sector.

In Delaware, the number of prisoner deaths reported for Oct. 27 was incorrect and should have been 11, not 17. It has been updated here.

Early weeks of data for Vermont included multiple tests of the same prisoner. Starting on May 13, the data now accurately reflects the number of individual prisoners tested in Vermont.

In Texas, updates to the data overcounted the number of employee tests for the weeks of May 13, May 20 and May 27 after the state redesigned its website and how it classified tests for employees. These figures have been amended.

In Georgia, the prisoner cases and recoveries inadvertently counted some cases in private prisons and county facilities twice, for most weeks before Sept. 15. These figures have been corrected throughout the data.

Beginning the week of June 2, we moved our data collection up by one day. Data for that week represents a six-day count of cases between May 28 and June 2.

For the week of July 14, Michigan undertook an audit of cases and found duplicates that needed to be removed from its unique numbers. As a result, the number of cases dropped by 5 percent from the previous week. To estimate case counts for previous weeks, we have adjusted the original figures by that percentage. As an additional result of the audit, the prisoner test numbers fell by 717.

Starting with the week of July 21, South Carolina's Department of Corrections began to report cases—but not testing counts—for prisoners held in "other locations," such as county jails and hospitals.

The number of staff deaths in Maine for the week of July 21 was wrong. It should have been 0 and has been corrected.

In the week of Aug. 4, the Federal Bureau of Prisons began to report four deaths of people who had been released to home confinement, under the supervision of halfway houses. Their testing and case totals, however, do not include people on home confinement, and testing figures do not include private prisons.

In mid-August, Pennsylvania began reporting cases for prisoners and staff in community correction facilities. We have included these cases starting with numbers as of Aug. 18, and have updated inmate population figures to add individuals held in community corrections facilities. The number of individuals recovered among both staff and prisoners doesn't count individuals in community corrections facilities.

The total number of prisoner cases we reported dropped between Aug. 27 and Aug. 28, when we incorporated a data update from New Jersey that removed about 4 percent of cases in earlier weeks. New Jersey updated its prisoner case totals to remove cases where a prisoner tested negative for COVID-19 after initially testing positive. To estimate case counts for previous weeks, we have adjusted the original figures by that percentage.

The number of staff cases we initially reported for Sept. 22 and Sept. 29 in Massachusetts incorrectly counted 100 additional cases in the state. Thus, this also showed too many staff cases nationally. We have updated the figures and charts with the accurate total for both of those weeks.

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