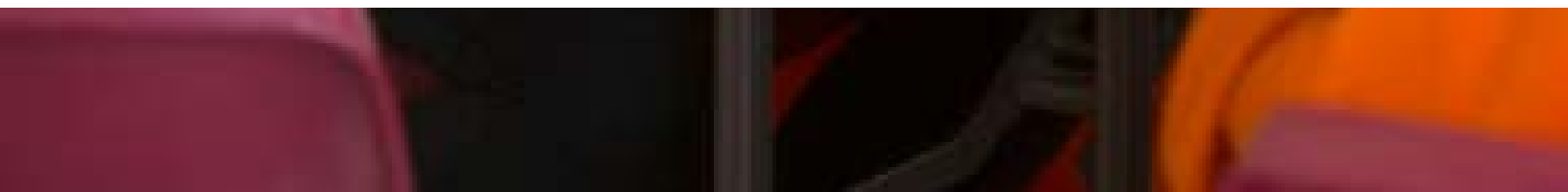




# Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis:

PART 3

## **THE HARM TO WOMEN AND FAMILIES**



December 2018, Published by:



**FWD.us** is a bipartisan political organization that believes America's families, communities, and economy thrive when everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. For too long, our broken immigration and criminal justice systems have locked too many people out from the American dream. Founded by leaders in the technology and business communities, we seek to grow and galvanize political support to break through partisan gridlock and achieve meaningful reforms. Together, we can move America forward.

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# Introduction

After decades of sustained prison growth, Arizona today has the fourth highest imprisonment rate in the country, meaning it imprisons more of its residents than any other state except for Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Arizona's prison growth cannot be justified by more crime or a larger state population. Instead, it was driven by policy decisions to send more people to prison for first-time and non-violent offenses, and to keep people in prison far beyond the national average.

Women have been especially impacted by these policy decisions. This report, the third in FWD.us' *Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis* series, examines an oft-hidden consequence of Arizona's large prison population — the growing number of women behind bars. Female imprisonment has significant ripple effects. Women in prison in Arizona are often mothers and caretakers. Research shows that they are also often victims themselves, as the vast majority have endured past physical and sexual abuse. Today, Arizona imprisons women at almost twice the rate of other states.

Arizona's rising imprisonment rate has also led to a growing number of families who have had a loved one incarcerated. Research shows that having a family member incarcerated significantly decreases household income, increases the likelihood of divorce and separation, and — for children — leads to a host of problems, including decreased mental and physical health and worsened school outcomes. This report will delve into new findings from a demographic study by FWD.us and Cornell University on the share of people who have had a family member incarcerated and the consequences for families.

All three reports in this series were created using individual-level data on people admitted to Arizona prisons. The first report in the series, "The High Price of Prison Growth," examines how the state reached this crisis point, and how Arizona's outsized prison population has come at a high cost to the state's economy. The second report, "The Cost to Communities" analyzed these problems on the community level, revealing how some communities in Arizona bear the burden of over-imprisonment more than others. Experts on corrections data cleaned and analyzed prison data in accordance with national standards. See the methodology section for a description of our process and definitions.

# The harm to women

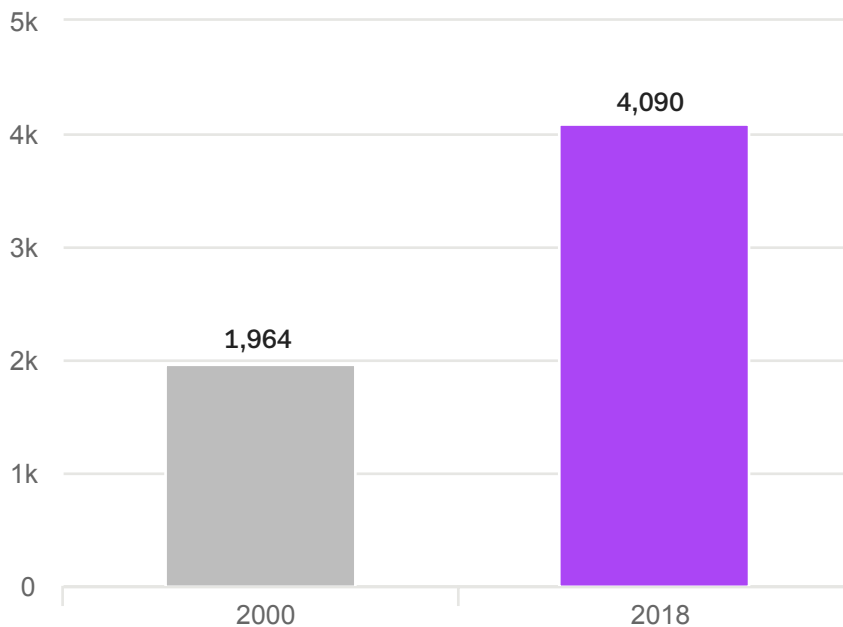
While women and men enter prison through the same pathways, women are unique in several key ways. National research shows that incarcerated women are more likely to suffer from mental health problems than their male counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Women are also more likely to exhibit signs of substance use disorder, including a high likelihood to have used drugs in the month before the crime, and to have been under the influence of drugs at the time of the offense.<sup>2</sup> Women in prison are often victims themselves. Nationwide research conducted among women in jails found that a majority had survived or witnessed violence, including a shockingly high number — 86 percent — who endured sexual violence at some point in their lives. Finally, women in prison are often mothers and caretakers.<sup>3</sup>

Today, women make up 10 percent of Arizona's prison population.<sup>4</sup> This is in line with, though slightly higher than national numbers. Across the country women make up only 7.5 percent of people held in state prisons.<sup>5</sup>

The number of women in Arizona's prisons has doubled since 2000, far outpacing the growth among men (55 percent) or the national growth in female prisoners. From 2000 to 2016, the total number of women in state prisons across the country grew 19 percent, compared to 104 percent growth in Arizona.<sup>6</sup>

## The number of women in prison in Arizona has more than doubled since 2000.

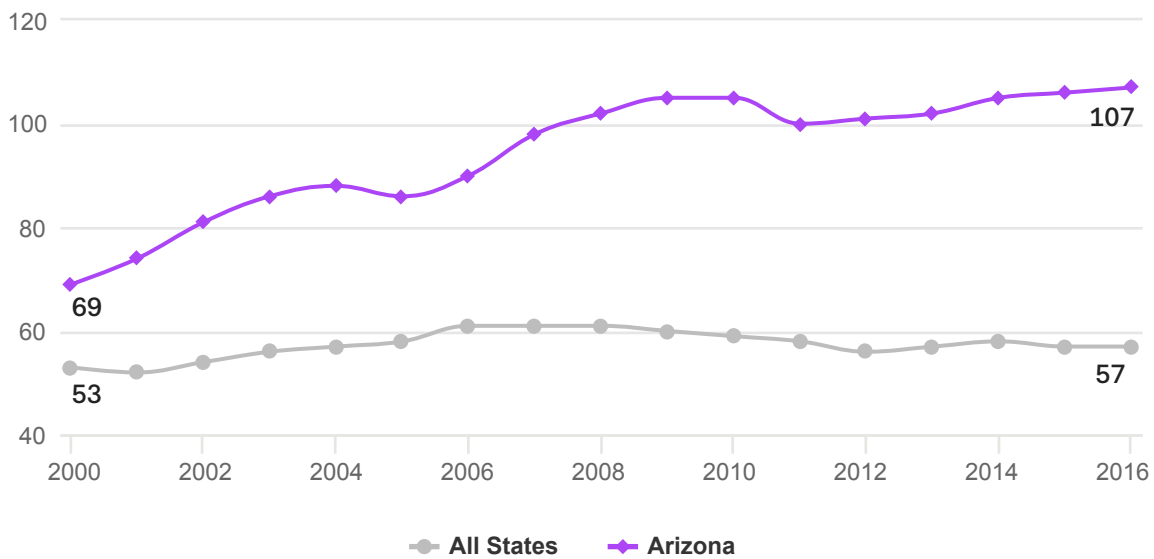
Female Prison Population, 2000 vs. 2018



As the number of women in prison has grown rapidly, so has Arizona's female imprisonment rate (the number of women behind bars for every 100,000 residents). The female imprisonment rate grew by over 50 percent since 2000. Today, Arizona imprisons women at almost twice the rate of other states, at 107 women in prison for every 100,000 residents compared to 57 per 100,000 nationally.

## Arizona's female imprisonment rate has continued to grow even as the national rate leveled off.

Female Imprisonment Rates, Arizona vs. National State Average, 2000-2016

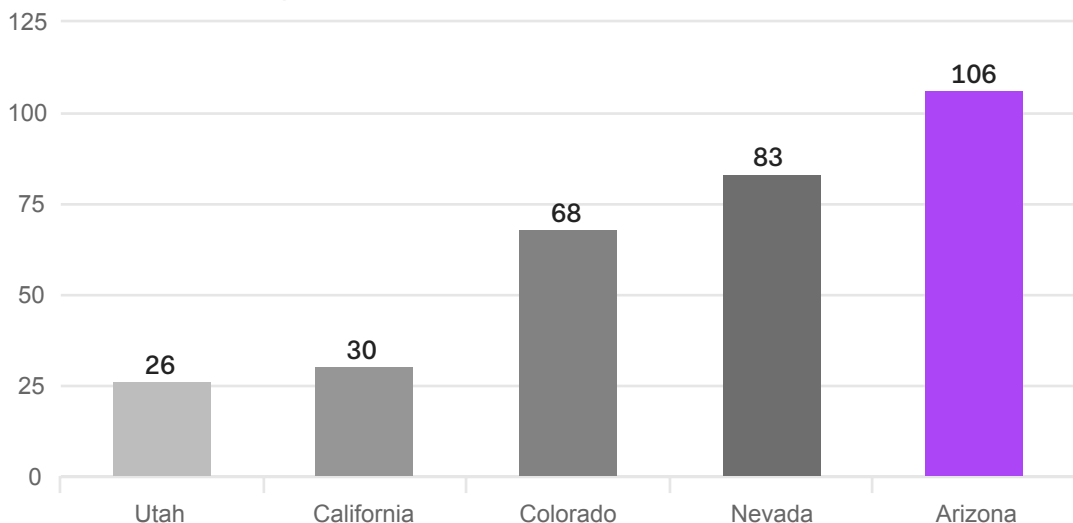


Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoners Statistics series

The first report in this series examined how Arizona's use of prison compared to other states in the region.<sup>7</sup> It detailed how Arizona has a similar crime rate to four of its five immediate neighbors — Utah, California, Colorado, and Nevada — but sends far more people to prison per capita. For women, Arizona is even more of an outlier among its neighbors. Overall, Arizona imprisons people at about three times the rate of Utah. For women, however, Arizona imprisons at four times the rate of Utah.

## Arizona imprisons four times as many women per capita as Utah, though the states have similar crime rates.

Arizona vs. Neighboring State Female Imprisonment Rates (Sentenced Women Prisoners Per 100,000 Residents), 2016

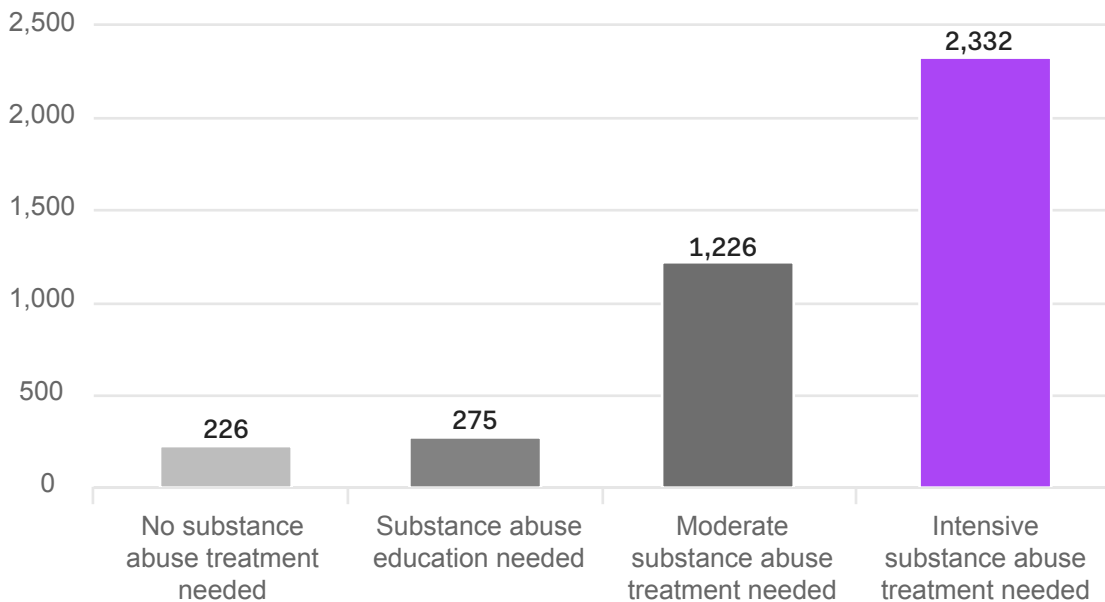


Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoners Statistics series

National research shows that incarcerated women often report high rates of substance use disorder, serious mental illness, and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>8</sup> While Arizona-specific information is limited, what is available aligns with these findings. According to an assessment conducted by the Arizona Department of Corrections, 88 percent of women in prison in Arizona have moderate to intensive substance abuse treatment needs. That means that, as of 2017, there were more than 3,500 women in prison with unmet substance abuse treatment needs.

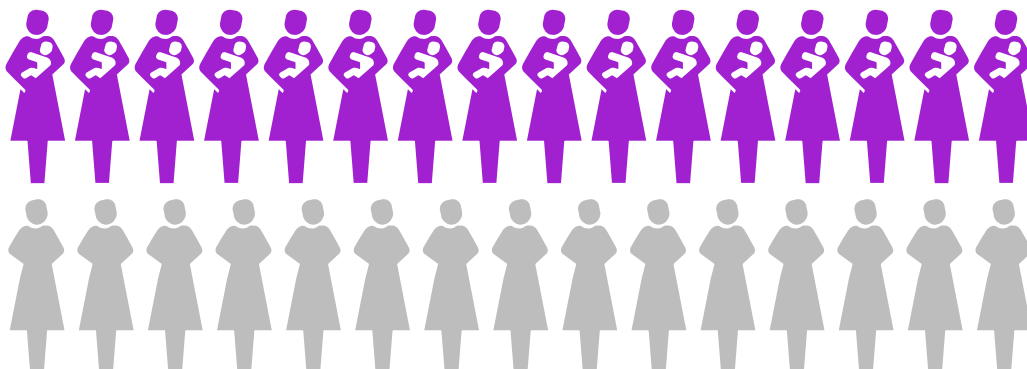
### Most women in prison have significant unmet substance abuse treatment needs.

Identified Substance Abuse Treatment Needs of Female Population, June 2017



Many women in prison have someone at home who relies on them. Fifty-three percent reported having a dependant, likely a minor child. Nationwide, research has shown that a majority of mothers in prison lived with their children prior to their incarceration.<sup>9</sup> The same research found that mothers in prison are often single parents, meaning that, when they go to prison, their children are more likely to end up in foster care or other government-funded out-of-home placement.

### Half of the women in prison in Arizona have dependents.



## Women have been particularly impacted by the growing use of prison for non-violent, first-time felonies.

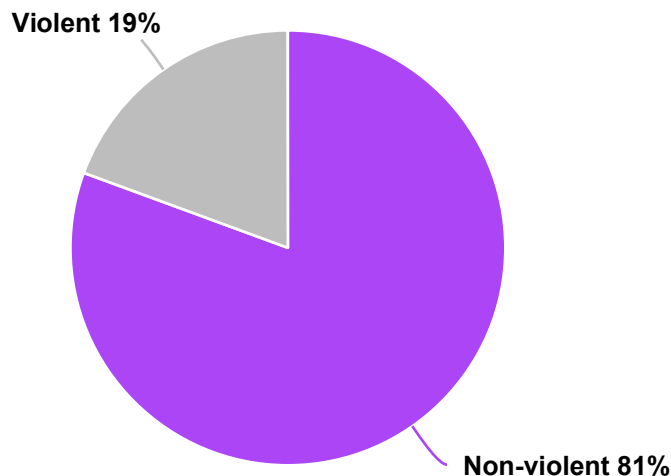
As reported in the first report in this series, *Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis: The High Price of Prison Growth*, the state has increasingly sent people to prison for non-violent and first-time felony offenses instead of alternatives like probation or drug treatment.<sup>15</sup> These trends have been pronounced — and detrimental — for women, as women are more likely than men to commit and be imprisoned for these lower-level offenses.

For more information on how “non-violent” and “first-time” designations were made, please see the methodology section.

The vast majority — seven out of 10 people — entering prison in Arizona are being punished for a non-violent crime. This trend is even more acute for women, with eight out of every 10 women who went to prison last year sent for nothing more serious than a non-violent offense.

### Women are overwhelmingly committed to prison for non-violent offenses in Arizona.

Female Prison Admissions, FY2017



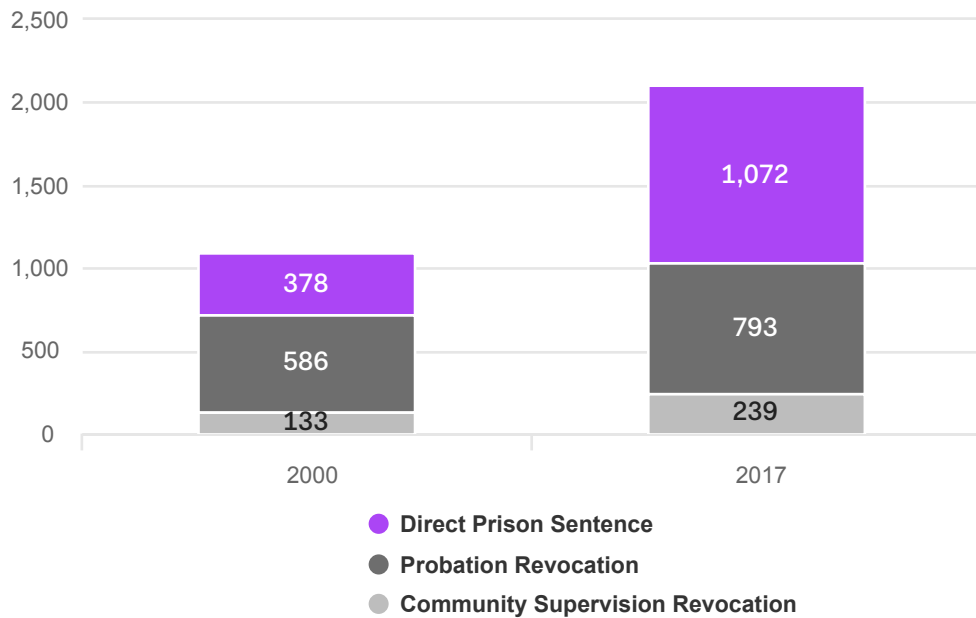
Arizona has become progressively more punitive towards women since 2000. From 2000 to 2017, the number of women entering Arizona's prisons for non-violent crimes has grown by 92 percent.

Some of this growth has come from women who were originally given an alternative sentence in the community — such as probation or drug court — but failed to follow the rules, and were sentenced to prison as a consequence, called a revocation.<sup>16</sup> However, this is not the majority of the growth — most of it has come from more women being sentenced to prison directly from court. This group has grown by 180 percent since 2000, and now comprises half of all the women sent to prison for non-violent crimes.



**The number of women admitted to prison in Arizona for non-violent crimes has grown significantly since 2000 — largely driven by increases in women sentenced directly to prison.**

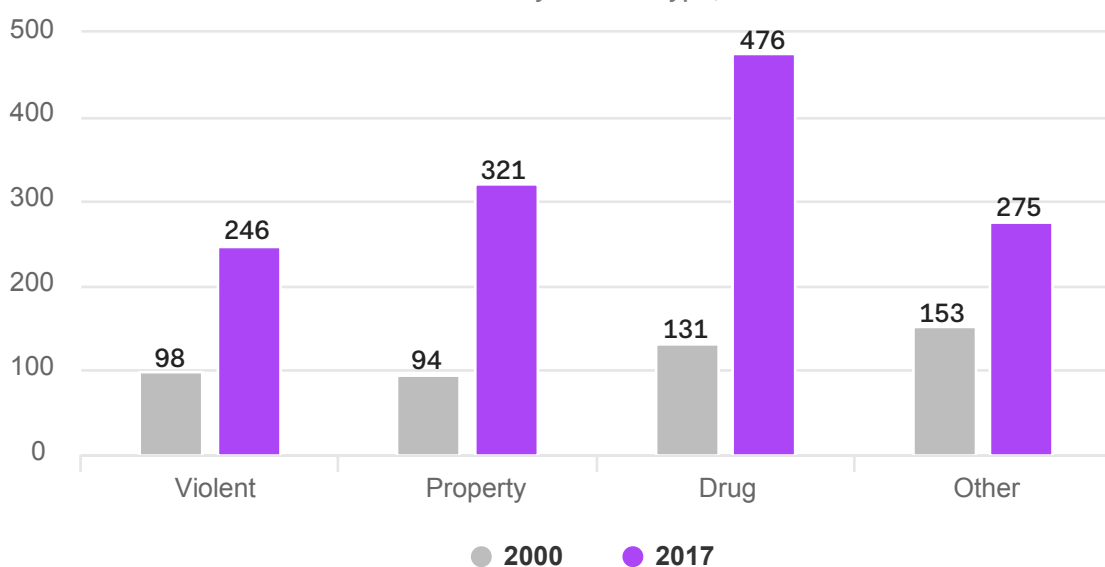
Female Prison Admissions for Non-Violent Offenses, FY2000 vs. FY2017



This growth has been particularly pronounced for property and drug offenses. The number of women sentenced directly to prison for these non-violent offenses has increased by 250 percent since 2000.

**The number of women sentenced directly to prison each year for drug and property crimes in Arizona grew by 3.5x since 2000.**

Female New Prison Sentence Admissions by Offense Type, FY2000 vs. FY2017



These practices contradict the growing body of research demonstrating that prison terms do not reduce recidivism more than alternatives like probation or drug court. Matched samples of people sent to prison or sentenced to prison alternatives have consistently found no differences in re-arrest or re-conviction rates, even when controlling for individuals' education, employment, drug abuse status, and current offense.<sup>17</sup>

Among the ten most common offenses for which women were sent to prison in 2017, nine were non-violent, including drug possession, driving under the influence, and drug distribution. The number of women admitted to prison for many of these non-violent offenses grew exponentially since 2000. The number of women sent to prison for drug possession, for instance, increased by 137 percent. The number of women sent to prison for shoplifting grew by nearly 200 percent.

## **Nine of the top 10 offenses for which women were admitted to prison in Arizona were non-violent.**

Top 10 Most Serious Offenses for Women Sentenced to Prison in Arizona, FY2000 vs. FY2017

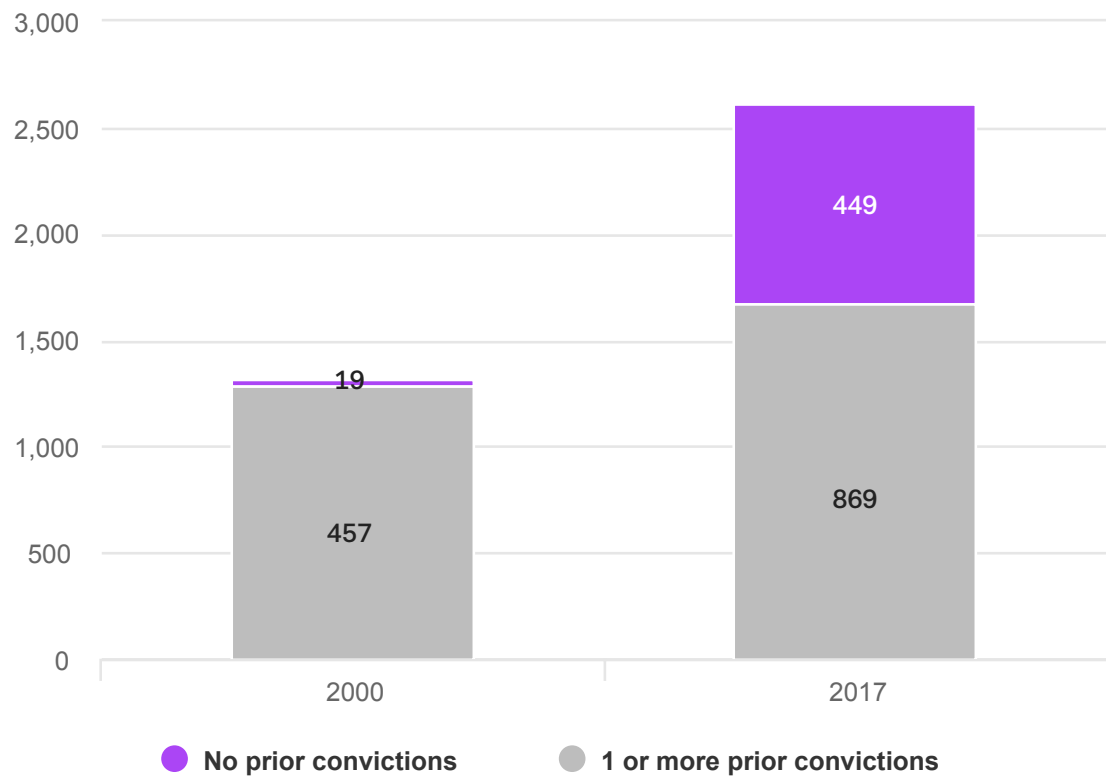
<b>Top 10 Most Serious Offenses for Women Sentenced to Prison in Arizona</b>	<b>No. of Admissions, FY2000</b>	<b>No. of Admissions, FY2017</b>	<b>% change since FY2000</b>
Drug possession	300	710	137%
DUI/DWI	169	232	37%
Aggravated assault	74	222	200%
Drug distribution	128	190	48%
Shoplifting	31	92	197%
Drug production and manufacturing	69	83	20%
Theft	112	83	-26%
Forgery	79	73	-8%
Second degree burglary	24	60	150%
Theft of means of transportation	4	57	1325%

Alongside growth in admissions for non-violent crimes, Arizona has also significantly increased the number of women sent to prison on their first felony conviction. In 2000, only four percent of women admitted to prison had no prior felony convictions. By 2017, that proportion had grown to 34 percent. Alongside growth in the overall number of women admitted to prison, this means that 449 women were sent to prison in 2017 on their first felony conviction compared to 19 in 2000.

This trend is not evidence-based. Research shows that people sent to prison on their first conviction may be particularly vulnerable to the criminogenic effect of prison — in other words, they may be more likely to reoffend when they come out than when they went in.<sup>18</sup>

## A growing proportion of women sentenced to prison in Arizona have no prior felonies.

Female New Prison Sentence Admissions by Felony Conviction History, FY2000 vs. FY2017



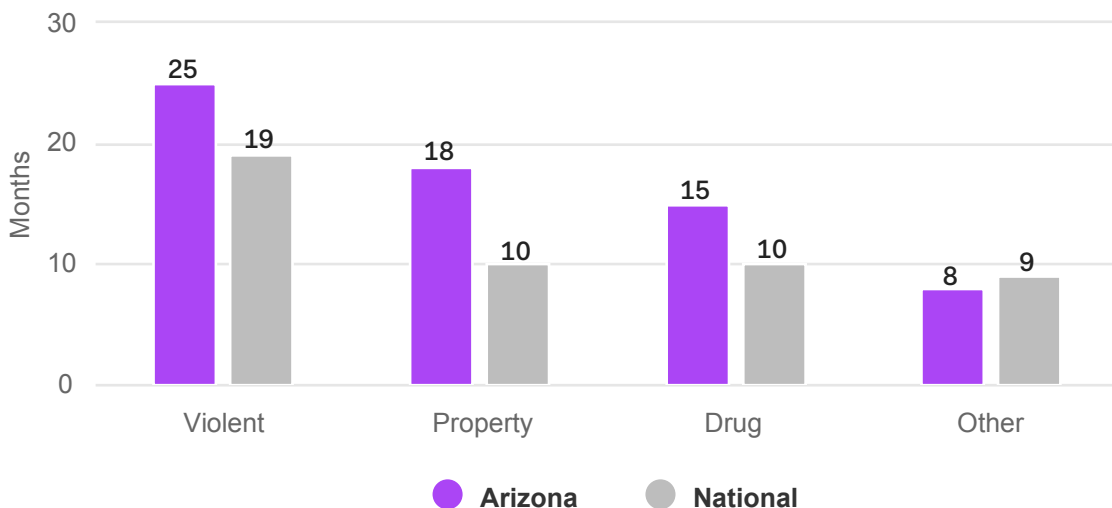
## Women in Arizona spend far longer in prison than women nationally.

As shown in the first report in this series, *Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis: The High Price of Prison Growth*, Arizona keeps people in prison significantly longer than other states.<sup>19</sup> This is also true for women — and especially so for women sentenced to prison for non-violent offenses. These additional months and years behind bars are not making Arizona safer. Researchers have studied similar people in prison with shorter and longer sentences and have consistently found that longer sentences do not make people less likely to commit another crime in the future.<sup>20</sup>

Regardless of the type of crime, women in Arizona go to prison for longer. For drug crimes, Arizona women spend an average of five more months behind bars than women nationally. For property crimes, this disparity is even greater: Arizona's women spend eight months longer in prison.

### Arizona's women stay in prison 50 to 80 percent longer than the national average for property and drug crimes.

Median Length of Stay by Offense Type, for Women, Arizona New Court Commitments, FY2017 vs. National Average, 2012

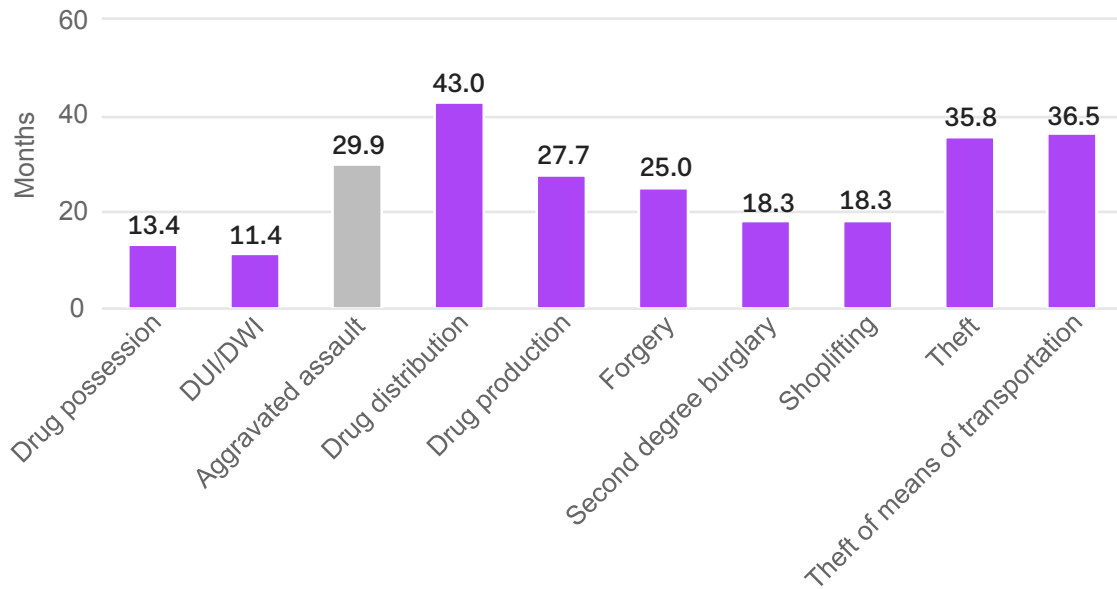


Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2013

For the most common crimes for which women are sent to prison, drug possession and driving under the influence (DUI), women are sentenced to around a year behind bars. A year in prison, though shorter than the vast majority of sentences handed out in Arizona, comes at a high cost. Even relatively short periods of incarceration come with a host of destabilizing impacts, including the potential loss of a home, job, and partner.

## For the most common crimes, women are sentenced to between one and three years in prison in Arizona.

Female New Prison Sentences by Most Serious Offense, Top 10 Offenses at Admission, FY 2017 (Sentences for non-violent crimes are highlighted in purple.)



There are particularly high costs for women with children. The separation creates intense stress for both women and children.<sup>21</sup> While incarcerated, it is often difficult for children to see their mothers due to travel costs and other barriers. Studies have found that children have poorer grade retention in the years immediately following their mother's entry into prison, and that adolescents are far more likely to drop-out of school in the year that their mother enters jail or prison.<sup>22</sup>

## The harm to families

As the number of men and women behind bars has grown substantially over the past 40 years, in Arizona, as well as nationally, so has the number of families who have had a loved one taken away. New research from FWD.us and researchers at Cornell University shows that one in two adults (45 percent) have had an immediate family member spend at least one night in jail or prison.

This shocking new estimate of family incarceration is the result of online and phone surveys of a national representative sample of more than 4,000 adults in the summer of 2018. According to survey results, more than 113 million people have had a parent, sibling, child, spouse, or co-parent incarcerated.<sup>10</sup>

While the majority of families have been exposed to short-term incarceration, long prison sentences also affect a surprising number of families. One in seven adults has had an immediate family member incarcerated for longer than one year, and one in 34 has had an immediate family incarcerated for more than 10 years.

### Many families have had a loved one incarcerated.

**1 in 2** adults has had a family member incarcerated

**1 in 4** adults has had a sibling incarcerated

**1 in 5** adults has had a parent incarcerated

**1 in 7** adults has had a spouse or co-parent incarcerated

**1 in 8** adults has had a child incarcerated

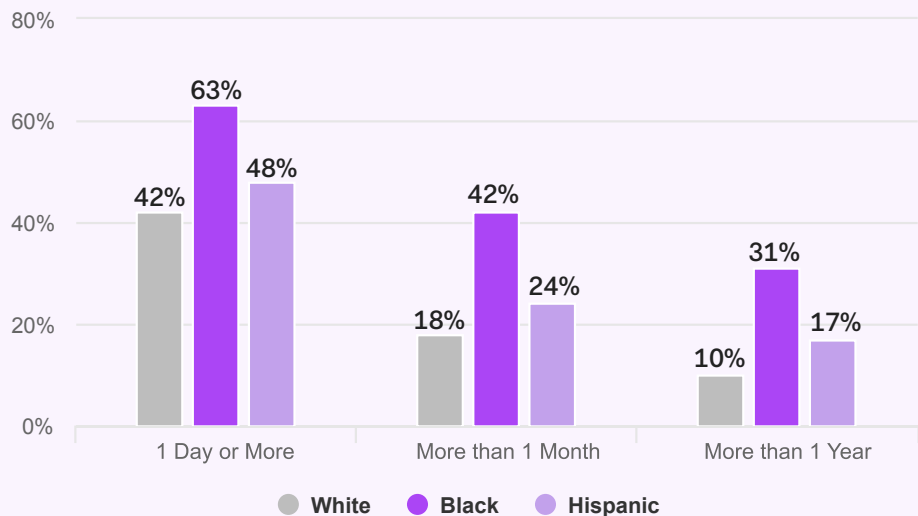
FWD.us, The Impact of Incarceration on Families in America

The second report in this series, *Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis: The Cost to Communities*, showed that imprisonment disproportionately impacts communities of color.<sup>11</sup> This new research finds similar results for families — black and Hispanic people are more likely to have had a loved one incarcerated, particularly for long prison sentences. More than six in 10 black adults have had an immediate family

member incarcerated and nearly one-third have had an immediate family member incarcerated for more than one year. These rates are 42 percent and 10 percent, respectively, for white people and 48 percent and 17 percent for Hispanic people.

### Familial incarceration more common among Black, Hispanic adults.

Percent of People who Have Had an Immediate Family Member Incarcerated, by Race and Ethnicity



FWD.us, *The Impact of Incarceration on Families in America*

### The Impact of Incarceration on Families

Incarceration does not just impact the person who is sent to jail or prison, it reverberates into the lives of those of their loved ones with severe consequences for their financial security, health, and emotional well-being. According to past research, two in three families (65 percent) were unable to meet basic needs such as food, housing, and medical care while their family member was incarcerated.<sup>12</sup> For children, having a parent incarcerated has been shown to cause emotional stress and financial hardship, which leads to a wide range of problems and limits their future success.<sup>13</sup> Numerous studies have also found that incarceration leads to less stable families. Male incarceration is strongly correlated with a lower likelihood of marriage and higher rates of divorce and separation.<sup>14</sup>

To learn more about the scope and consequences of familial incarceration, please see the full report, *The Impact of Incarceration on Families in America*, available at <https://EverySecond.fwd.us/>.

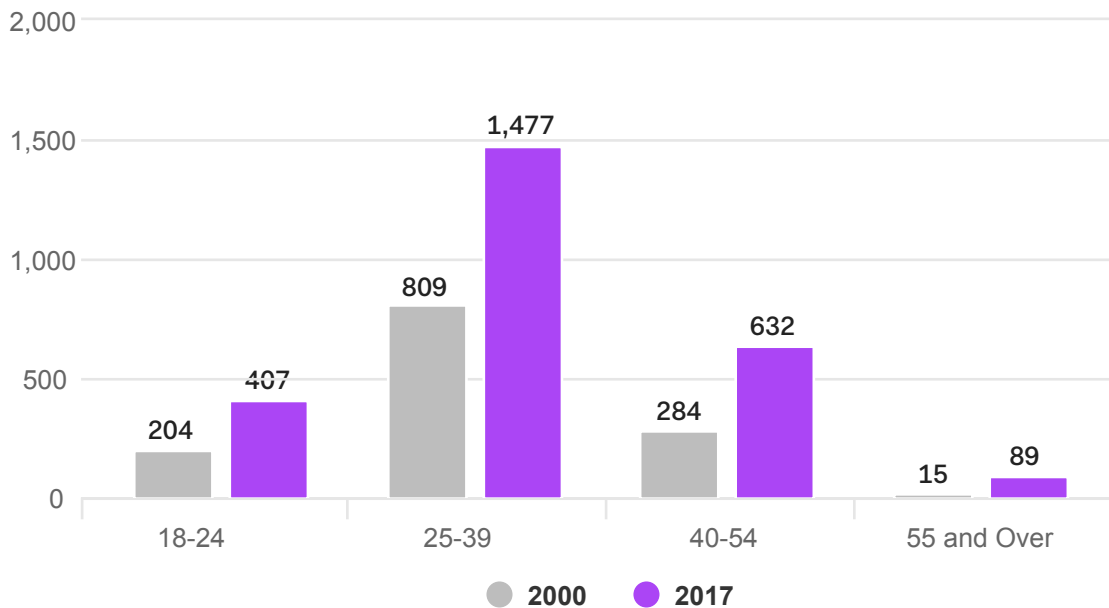
# Where female imprisonment hits hardest

The second report in this series, *Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis: The Cost to Communities*, revealed the unequal burden of prison in Arizona.<sup>23</sup> It found that some communities in the state, particularly rural areas and communities of color, bear the burden of imprisonment far more than others. This is also true when looking only at women — though the impacted groups differ. As the number of women sent to prison in Arizona has nearly doubled since 2000, much of it has come at the cost of older women, white and Hispanic women, and women from rural areas of the state.

Growth in the number of women sent to prison has not been felt equally across generations. The majority of women admitted to prison today are between 25 and 39 years old, a group that has grown substantially since 2000. However, admissions for older women, those who are 40 and above, have increased at an even faster rate — growing by 141 percent since 2000.

## Women ages 25–39 make up the largest overall share of prison admissions in Arizona, but admissions for older women have grown by 141 percent since 2000.

Female Admissions by Age, FY2000 vs. FY2017



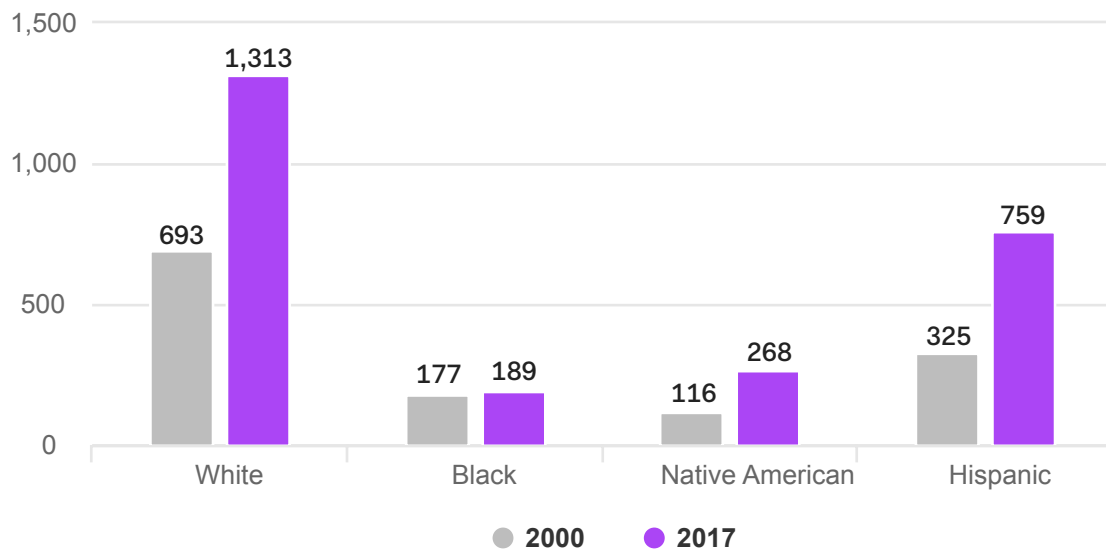
Much of this accelerating growth among older women can be attributed to the state's increasing use of prison for drug crimes. Older women are slightly more likely to be sent to prison for drug crimes than younger women. Thirty-nine percent of women admitted to prison between the age of 40 and 54 were sent for drug crimes, and 45 percent of women over the age of 55, compared to 36 percent of women ages 25-39. DUI/DWI is the second most common crime at admission for older women, after simple drug possession.



This growth has also not been felt equally across racial and ethnic groups. Since 2000, the number of white women sent to prison has nearly doubled and the number of Hispanic women sent to prison has grown by 134 percent, while the number of black women has stayed relatively constant. This data shows that there has also been substantial growth in the number of Native American women sent to prison in Arizona — though this likely is not the full picture. Since crimes committed on reservations are often handled by tribal or federal authorities, women who commit crimes in those areas may be incarcerated in federal or tribal facilities, rather than state facilities.

### Largest growth in prison admissions among white, Hispanic women in Arizona.

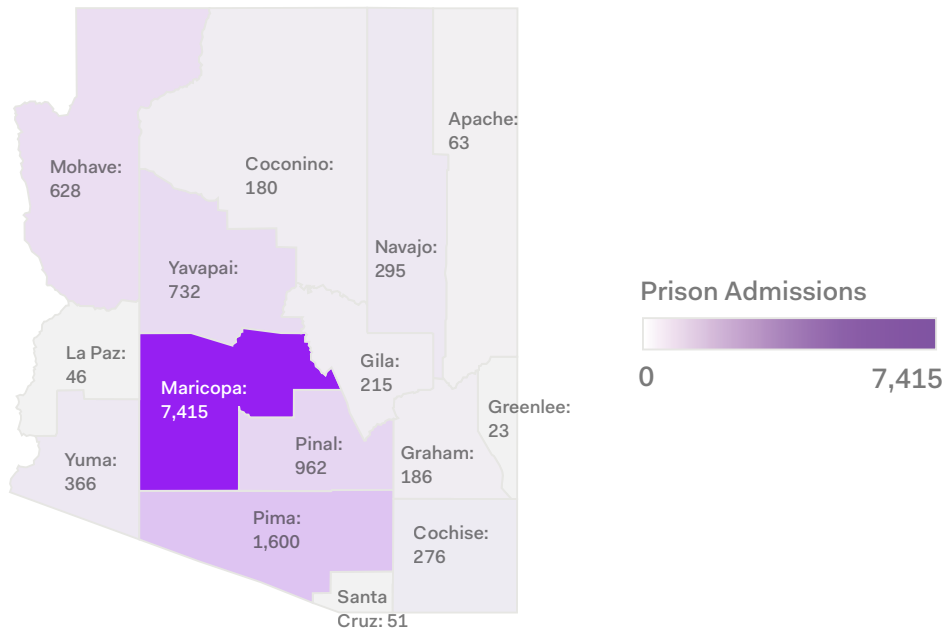
Female Admissions by Race, FY2000 vs. FY2017



This growth has also come from some areas of the state more than others. The vast majority of women who were sentenced to prison in the last five years came from the most populous county in Arizona, Maricopa, followed by urban Pima and Pinal counties. Due to their sizes, these counties are primarily responsible for much of the growth in female admissions. Maricopa alone is responsible for just under 50 percent of statewide growth in female admissions, followed by Pinal (14 percent), Pima (11 percent), and Yavapai (9 percent).

## Urban counties send the most women to prison in Arizona.

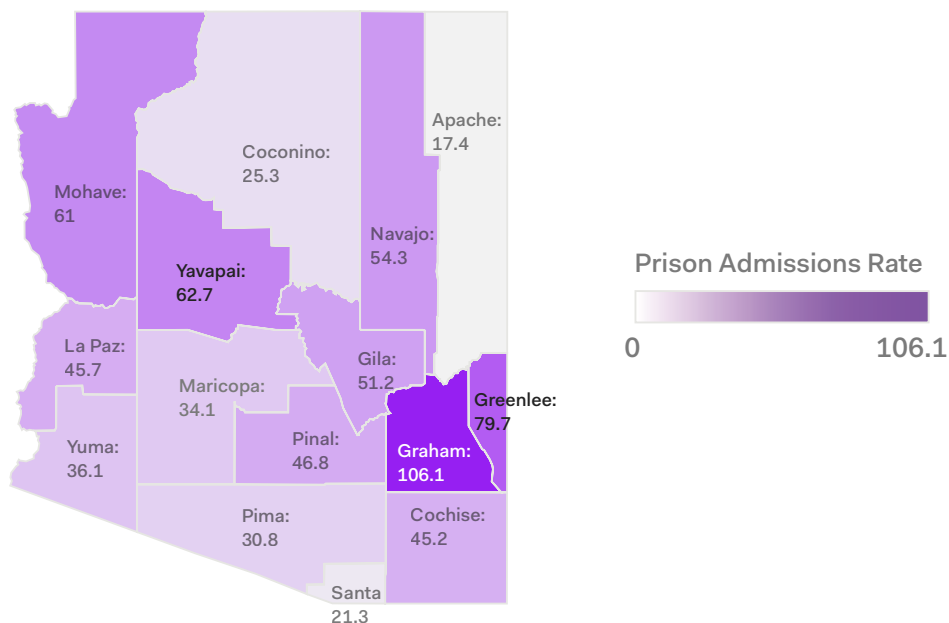
Female Admissions by County, FY2013-2017



While urban counties are primarily responsible for the growth, rural counties are sending a much higher percentage of their female residents to prison. Graham County, a rural county in the central part of the state, has by far the highest rate of female imprisonment, followed by similarly rural Greenlee County. This trend for women echoes a larger trend discussed in more detail in the second report in this series — that, in proportion to their population, rural counties use prison more than urban counties.<sup>24</sup>

## Rural counties have the highest female admissions rates.

Female Admissions Rate (per 10,000) by County, FY2013-FY2017



# Conclusion

Over the last two decades, Arizona has increasingly turned to more and longer prison sentences in responding to less serious crimes. As a group that rarely commits violent crimes, women have been particularly hurt by this change, and have seen their numbers behind bars skyrocket since 2000. These policies have also come at a great cost to families, as more are living apart from a loved one and suffering the consequences of family separation.

Arizona's imprisonment crisis has come at a high price to the state's women and families. As shown in the first two reports in this series, it has also come at a great cost to Arizona's economies and communities. These costs are incalculable. They are also avoidable. Red and blue states across the country are getting more public safety with smaller prison populations through innovative, research-driven policy reforms. It's time for Arizona to follow these proven examples. It can no longer afford the alternative.

# Methodology

*Unless otherwise cited, the analyses in this report were conducted by FWD.us using individual-level data acquired from the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) covering over 30 years and nearly half a million records. Data was cleaned and coded for analysis by researchers and statisticians with extensive experience working with federal, state, and local corrections agencies across the country.*

## Data Used

The analysis relied on two primary datasets:

- Records of all prison admissions from July 1985–June 2017 (or FY86-FY17) (N=464,641)
- A snapshot of the prison population on June 30, 2017 (N=49,848)

An ADC codebook was provided for these datasets. Whenever possible, the label or definition provided in the codebook was used in this report. A few exceptions where labels were changed or consolidated for clarity are noted below.

Unless otherwise specified, all analysis is based on fiscal years running from July 1–June 30.

## Cleaning and Data Definitions

Twenty cases were dropped from the admissions file because of key missing or incomprehensible information, including birth dates indicating that an individual was younger than 14 at admission and or missing/incorrectly coded movement types. This left 464,426 records for analysis.

These records were coded into four admission categories using the variables ADMIT\_MOVETYP and ADMIT\_REASON:

1. **New prison sentence**, comprising all admission movements labeled as “first commitment” or “recommitment” except for those with a reason code of “technical violation,” as well as admission movements labeled as “sentenced to prison as a condition of probation” for admission reason “new felony conviction.”
2. **Probation revocation**, comprising all admission movements labeled as “first commitment — probation revocation” or “recommitment — probation revocation” for all reason codes.
3. **Community supervision revocation**, comprising all admission movements labeled “absconder from community supervision,” “return from community supervision,” or “community supervision revocation” for all reason codes.
4. **Other**, comprising admission movements labeled as “temporary placement-community supervision violation,” “sentenced to prison as a condition of probation” for reasons other than new conviction, “return from escape,” “transfer from another institution,” “violation of Drug Transition Program supervision,” “released in error return,” and “return from deportation.”

All admissions in the “other” category were excluded from admission counts in this report because these were not considered to be new admissions to prison. According to this rule, 51,813 records were excluded or approximately 1,500 per year of data. The vast majority of these records (47,347) were for temporary placement for community supervision violations. These were excluded because they could be duplicative of community supervision revocations which were included in the counts, for instance if someone was temporarily placed in DOC custody pending a revocation hearing and then later revoked. The median time spent in prison for this group was 3.5 months.

County-level information is based on an ADC variable (“ADMIT\_FROMLOC”) identifying the jurisdiction an individual “came from” according to the codebook provided. The codebook further notes that this generally means the county of conviction. Individuals coming from jurisdictions outside of Arizona were excluded from this analysis.

Information on the race and ethnicity of individuals admitted to ADC custody comes from the ADC variable “RACE.” The values in this variable included both racial and ethnic groups and does not distinguish by race within ethnic groups (that is, it does not distinguish between “white/Hispanic” and “black/Hispanic” for example). The names of the groups were re-coded to match general population data more closely (“Caucasian” in the ADC variable was coded as “white,” “African-American,” as black, etc.). This variable does not include information on people with multiple ethnicities.

## Offense Hierarchy

Every record in the admissions cohort could have up to 10 offenses listed related to a current or prior admission. If there were multiple offenses associated with a single admission these offenses were compared and ranked using the following rules in order to define a most serious offense for each record.

If the admission lists a murder offense with an unexpired sentence, the murder offense was always counted as most serious and overrode any other selection rules. Otherwise, the most serious offense was identified based on the following rules:

- Any offense listed that had an expired sentence (the sentence ended before the prison admission date) was excluded for new prison sentence admissions and probation revocation admissions. Expired sentences were included for community supervision revocations and other irregular admissions where the governing offense may otherwise appear expired, given the possibility a sentence may have been extended.
- ‘Violent offense’ and ‘dangerous offense’ flags were generated for all offenses
  - The ‘violent offense’ flag indicates offenses committed against a person
  - The ‘dangerous offense’ flag indicates individuals sentenced as ‘dangerous’ under A.R.S. § 13-704
- Offenses were coded into “offense groupings” using National Crime Information Center (NCIC) offense codes and input from in-state stakeholders. For instance, all assault crimes were included in one group, all burglary crimes were included in one group, and so forth.
- The offense related to a person’s current admission with the highest offense type using National Crime Information Center codes was initially selected as the most serious.
- If the admission had two or more offenses with the same offense grouping, the offense with the most flags (indicating dangerous or violent) was selected as the most serious offense. For example, an offense with two flags was selected as more serious than an offense with one flag.
- Because of the use of the “violent” flag, at this point any violent offense would have been selected above any non-violent offense.
- If the admission had two or more offenses with the same offense grouping and an equal number of flags, and the offenses were non-violent, the offense with the highest felony class was selected.
- If the admission had two or more offenses with the same offense grouping, an equal number of flags, and the same felony class, and the offenses were non-violent, the offense with the longest sentence was selected.

Using this offense hierarchy, any individual with a violent, unexpired crime related to their current admission would have that violent crime listed as their most serious offense.

For non-violent offenses, ranking is largely driven by felony class. For instance, an individual with a drug possession offense (class 4) and a drug paraphernalia crime (class 6) would have the drug possession offense listed as their most serious.

However someone who had a drug possession offense (class 4) and an aggravated assault offense (class 5) would be listed under aggravated assault because of the use of the offense groupings and violent flags.

The same offense hierarchy was used in the snapshot population file, although each record contained up to three offenses instead of up to 10.

In cases where an individual had an enhancement related to one offense but not all offenses on the individual's record, this enhancement was reported even if it was related to an offense other than the most serious offense. In particular, a flag was created to note when an individual had any conviction for a "repetitive offender" enhancement related to the current admission, whether or not that enhancement was on the individual's most serious crime.

## Definition of Violence

Arizona does not have an official, statutory definition of crimes of violence. It does have a "dangerous offense" enhancement, but this enhancement is used irregularly, even among crimes that are commonly defined as violent such as aggravated assault. Offenses were therefore coded as violent if they ever were associated with a "dangerous" enhancement, if they fit into one of the [NCIC](#) codes defined as "violent", or if partners in state identified them as violent crimes.

Crimes defined as violent include murder, kidnapping, sexual assault, assault, any sexual conduct with a minor, sex trafficking, robbery, endangerment, threatening or intimidating, discharge of weapons or explosives, arson, racketeering or assisting a criminal syndicate or street gang, extortion, first degree burglary, first degree escape, riot, terrorism, domestic violence, traffic offenses resulting in injury or death, and other related offenses.

## Criminal History

FELONY1, FELONY2, and FELONY3 are identified in the file codebook ("CODEBOOKAPAAC") as the "number of prior adult felony convictions." There is no indication of which variable (1, 2, or 3) represents the most recent data for each observation. In some cases, this felony history variable indicates the individual admitted has zero prior felony convictions, despite having prior admissions to ADC since 1985. To overcome these deficiencies, a measure was constructed combining prior ADC admissions, expired sentences related to an individual ADC number, and prior felonies reported in these variables.

An individual is counted as having no prior felony convictions if he or she has not been admitted to ADC custody previous to the current admission, has 0 reported in FELONY1, FELONY2, and FELONY3, and has no offenses listed on their current record that expired before the current admission. If a record was missing data in FELONY1, FELONY2, or FELONY3, that individual was counted as having a felony record. These prior felony records may not include felonies committed in other states.

## Sentence Length

The admissions file did not include full sentence length related to an individual's prison admission. It did

include sentence length related to each offense on that admission record and an indicator of whether sentences were served consecutively or concurrently. Full sentence length was calculated for each record using the following rules:

- For admissions with only one current offense, the full sentence is equal to the sentence for that offense.
- For admissions with multiple current offenses to be served concurrently, the full sentence is equal to the longest sentence related to any offense on their current record.
- For admissions with two offenses, to be served consecutively, the full sentence is equal to the sum of the two offense-related sentences.
- For records with more than two consecutive sentences, sentence length was excluded from summary statistics.

Using these assumptions, full sentence length was calculated for approximately 458,000 out of 464,000 records. Leaving out sentences with more than two sentences to be served consecutively (approximately 6,000 records) makes these estimates slightly downwardly biased, but this was determined to be the most conservative approach.

Life and death sentences were included in summary statistics with values of 40 and 50 years respectively.

## Researchers

**Felicity Rose** serves as the Director of Research and Policy for Criminal Justice Reform at FWD.us, where she oversees data-driven advocacy efforts in some of the nation's highest-incarcerating states. Before joining FWD.us, Ms. Rose worked at The Crime and Justice Institute and The Pew Charitable Trusts, where she led analysis of sentencing and corrections data to inform comprehensive policy reform efforts in seven states, including Florida, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Utah. While at Pew, Ms. Rose published the first nationwide study of length of stay in prison by state. She previously worked with the California Administrative Office of the Courts, the Yolo County Probation Department, and The Sentencing Project. She received her master's degree in public policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Cybele Kotonias** is a former criminal justice reform fellow at FWD.us. Her research focuses on state and federal sentencing reform, corrections policy, prosecutorial practice, and prison and jail reentry. Ms. Kotonias has worked in justice policy for more than seven years, holding positions at the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, and the Public Defender's Service for the District of Columbia. She received her master's degree in public policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

## ENDNOTES

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