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Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males, Summary

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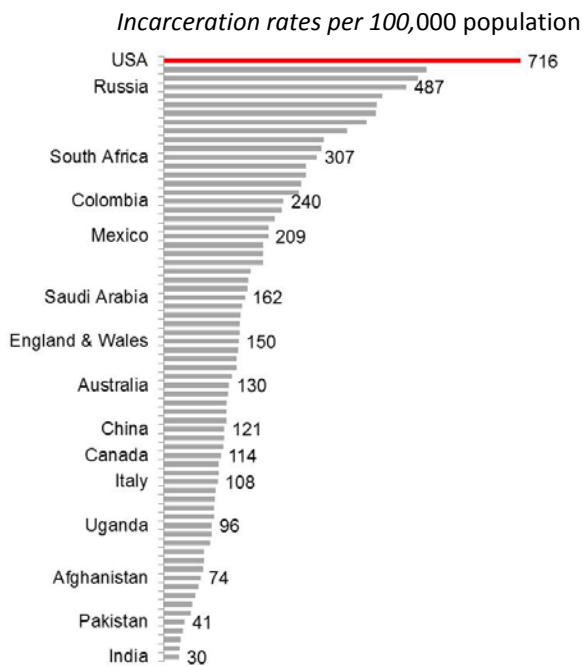
Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males

by John Pawasarat and Lois M. Quinn, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2014

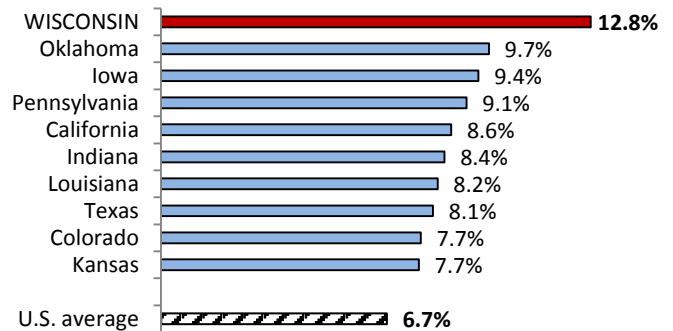
In 2013 the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute (ETI) completed a study on "Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males." The study documented what the black community already knew full well – that the state of Wisconsin had incarcerated over half of the young black men **from Milwaukee County** in state correctional facilities and that thousands of men from central city Milwaukee neighborhoods had state prison records. A June 2014 ETI report examining **statewide** data found prison rates for African American men at epidemic levels throughout Wisconsin and not just in Milwaukee County. For most ex-offenders, their prison records remain publicly posted on the Internet and impediments to employment for the rest of their lives. Consequently, the ETI reports identified the total populations of African American men who have been incarcerated in adult state correctional facilities from 1990 to 2012, using Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) public inmate records.

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, according to the International Centre for Prison Studies (2012).

The **2010 U.S. Census data** showed Wisconsin with the highest incarceration rate in the U.S. for African American men in state prison and local jails and double the national average.



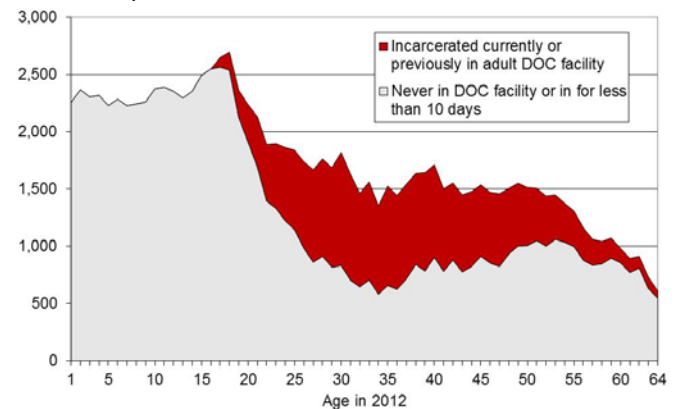
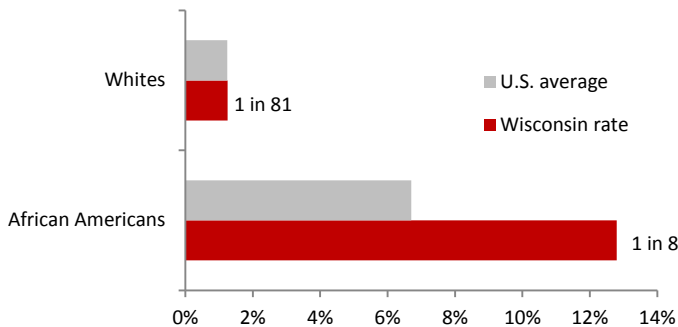
Ten Worst States for Incarceration of Working Age African American Men (2010 U.S. Decennial Census)



Wisconsin's rate of incarceration of black men (1 in 8) is 10 times higher than the rate for white men (1 in 81), according to 2010 U.S. Census data. While the incarceration rate for African American men is the worst in the country, the Wisconsin rate for white men is near the U.S. average.

The **Department of Corrections public inmate files** showed that 26,222 African American men from Milwaukee County had been imprisoned at some time from 1990-2012 or were currently incarcerated in 2012. Over half of African American men in the 30s and half of men in their early 40s from Milwaukee County have state prison records.

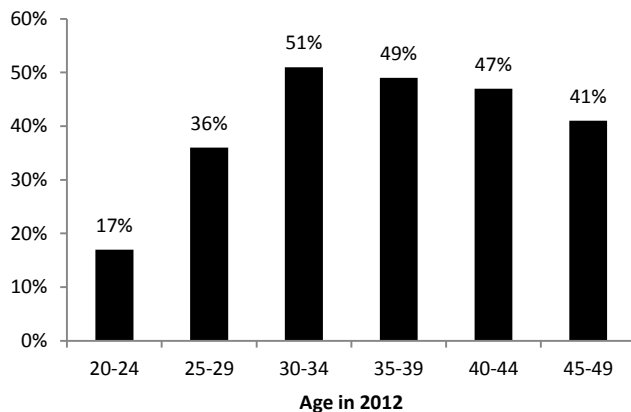
% of Men (18-64) in State Prisons and Local Jails



This is not a “Milwaukee problem.” It is a “Wisconsin problem.” Statewide, half of the African American men in the 30s have been in state prison as have a third of men in their late 20s.

High prison rates are seen for black men throughout Wisconsin. The largest number of men serving time come from (and return to) the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee.

% of African American Men in Wisconsin Who Have Been Incarcerated in State Correctional Facilities (1990-2012)

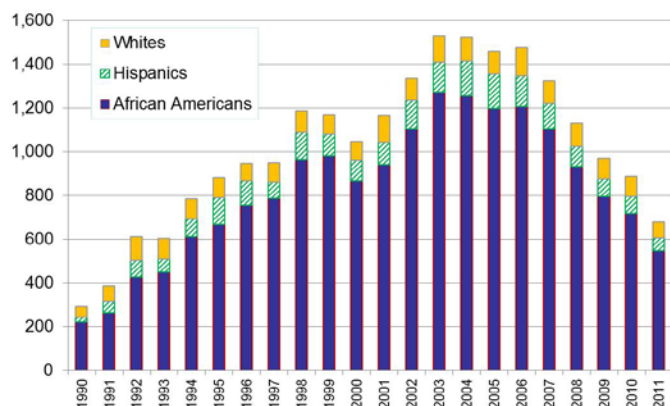


The prison population in Wisconsin has more than tripled since 1990, fueled by:

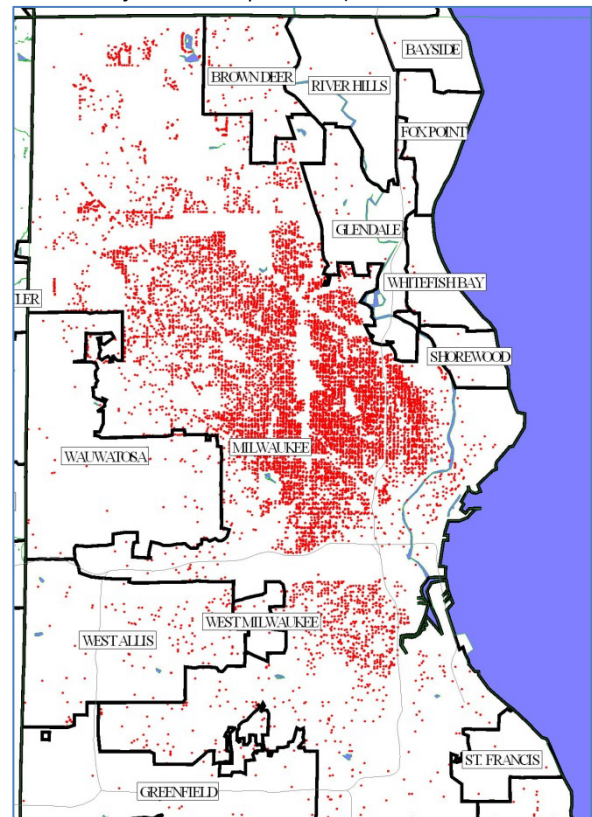
- increased government funding for drug enforcement (rather than treatment) and prison construction.
- truth-in-sentencing and mandatory minimum sentencing laws replacing judicial discretion in setting punishments.
- concentrated policing in minority communities.
- state incarceration for minor probation and supervision violations.

The “War on Drugs”

Yearly male prison admissions from Milwaukee County with drug-related offenses. (Some men have admissions in multiple years.)



Home residence of black male prisoners (incarcerated and released)



It costs **\$512,000 a day** to incarcerate African American men from Milwaukee County in state prison (est. for January 2012).

Wisconsin allocates more state tax dollars to the Department of Corrections than to the University of Wisconsin system (2011-2013 biennium).

The 26,222 black men incarcerated from Milwaukee County spent **over 116,000 years** in prison from 1990 to 2012.

One-third of the African American men incarcerated from Milwaukee County had only non-violent offenses.

40% of the incarcerated African American men from Milwaukee County had drug offenses.

John Pawasarat, director of ETI and co-author of the studies, noted, “These levels of incarceration have devastating impacts on children and families and represent a huge loss of labor force talent for Wisconsin. Without effective workforce, driver’s license, and education supports we could lose half a generation of young black men.”

For more information, see the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute website at www.eti.uwm.edu.