

The FBI’s annual Uniform Crime Report for 2011, released on Monday, October 29, 2012, reported a **continuation of the overall 20-year trend of declining crime in the nation.**¹ From 2010 to 2011 the number of violent offenses reported to law enforcement fell 3.8 percent and reported property offenses dropped 0.5 percent. Western states led the violent crime downward trend, with 4.8 percent fewer reported offenses in 2011, while the South showed the greatest decrease in reported property offenses with just under one percent fewer than in 2010.

The Justice Policy Institute (JPI), a national organization focused on reducing society’s reliance on incarceration and the justice system, has assembled key findings from these and other new crime data to put them in appropriate context.

Crime Continues to Decline in the United States

Percent Change (2010-2011)	Violent Crime	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Property Crime
Total	-3.8	-0.7	-2.5	-4.0	-3.9	-0.5
Northeast	-1.4	-6.2	-2.1	-0.2	-2.0	+0.3
Midwest	-4.0	+2.7	+0.2	-2.1	-5.7	- <0.1
South	-4.1	-0.9	-2.2	-5.6	-3.7	-0.9
West	-4.8	+0.4	-6.0	-5.9	-4.2	-0.8

Source: FBI, *Crime in the United States, 2011*, Table 4, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-4>

The United States continues to reduce the number of people held in prisons and jails alongside low crime rates. The continued declining crime rates demonstrate that justice reforms driven by best practices and financial constraints can yield safer outcomes. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has reported an overall trend of declining incarceration numbers in the U.S., including a reduction in the number of people confined in local jails from 748,728 in 2010 to 735,601 in 2011. These figures represent a ten-year low jail incarceration rate of 236 per 100,000 U.S. residents.² In addition, the overall U.S. prison population declined in 2010 for the first time since 1972.³

Drug abuse arrests have fallen but continue to dominate overall arrests. The estimated number of arrests for drug abuse violations also declined by 6.6 percent from 2010 to 2011, with the greatest decrease occurring for accused people under the age of 18. However, drug abuse arrests continue to represent the greatest number of arrests for any crime category, making up 12.3 percent of all arrests. Of all drug abuse arrests, 81.8 percent were for drug possession and 43.3 percent were for possession of marijuana.⁴

Arrests of Youth for Drug Abuse Violations Fell More Than 15 Percent

	All Ages		Percent Change 2010-2011	Under 18 Years of Age		Percent Change 2010-2011
	2010	2011		2010	2011	
Drug Abuse Arrests	1,638,846	1,531,251	-6.6%	132,921	112,892	-15.1%

African Americans continue to be arrested disproportionately. While white people still make up most arrests (approximately 6.6 million), African Americans are more likely to be arrested than whites. There were approximately 3 ½ arrests for every 100 white individuals, as compared with 8 ½ arrests for every 100 African Americans.⁵ (It should be noted that arrests don't represent people arrested; a person who is arrested twice counts as two arrests). This disparity in arrests is across multiple charges, with the exception of alcohol-related offenses, arson and vandalism, which were disproportionately of white people.

African Americans Continue to be Arrested Disproportionately in 2011

	2010		2011	
	White	Black/African American	White	Black/African American
% of all arrests	69.4	28.0	69.2	28.4
% total US population*			78.1	13.1
Rate of arrests per 100,000			3,525	8,618

*U.S. Department of Commerce, *USA Quickfacts*, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>

¹ FBI Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2011*, www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-1.

² Lauren E. Glaze, *Correctional Population in the United States, 2010*, (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011) <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus10.pdf>; Todd D. Minton, *Jain Inmates at Midyear 2011 – Statistical Tables* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012) <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/jim11st.pdf>

³ Paul Guerino, Paige M. Harrison, and William J. Sabol, *Prisoners in 2010* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics: 2012 revision. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p10.pdf>

⁴ FBI Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2011*, www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/persons-arrested/persons-arrested

⁵ FBI Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2011*, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-43>



1012 14th St. NW #400 Washington, DC 20005

202-558-7974

www.justicepolicy.org