

Justice Involvement, Part 1: Adults who were ever Arrested or Booked

10.8%

Key Statistic:

The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) estimates that 10.8% of all adults in California have ever been arrested or booked for breaking the law.

Survey Question:

Have you ever been arrested or booked for breaking the law?

Population:

California adults, currently living in a noninstitutionalized residences or group quarters (e.g., long-term care facilities, prisons, etc.)

Data Source:

CHIS 2021-2022 Data, Public Use File

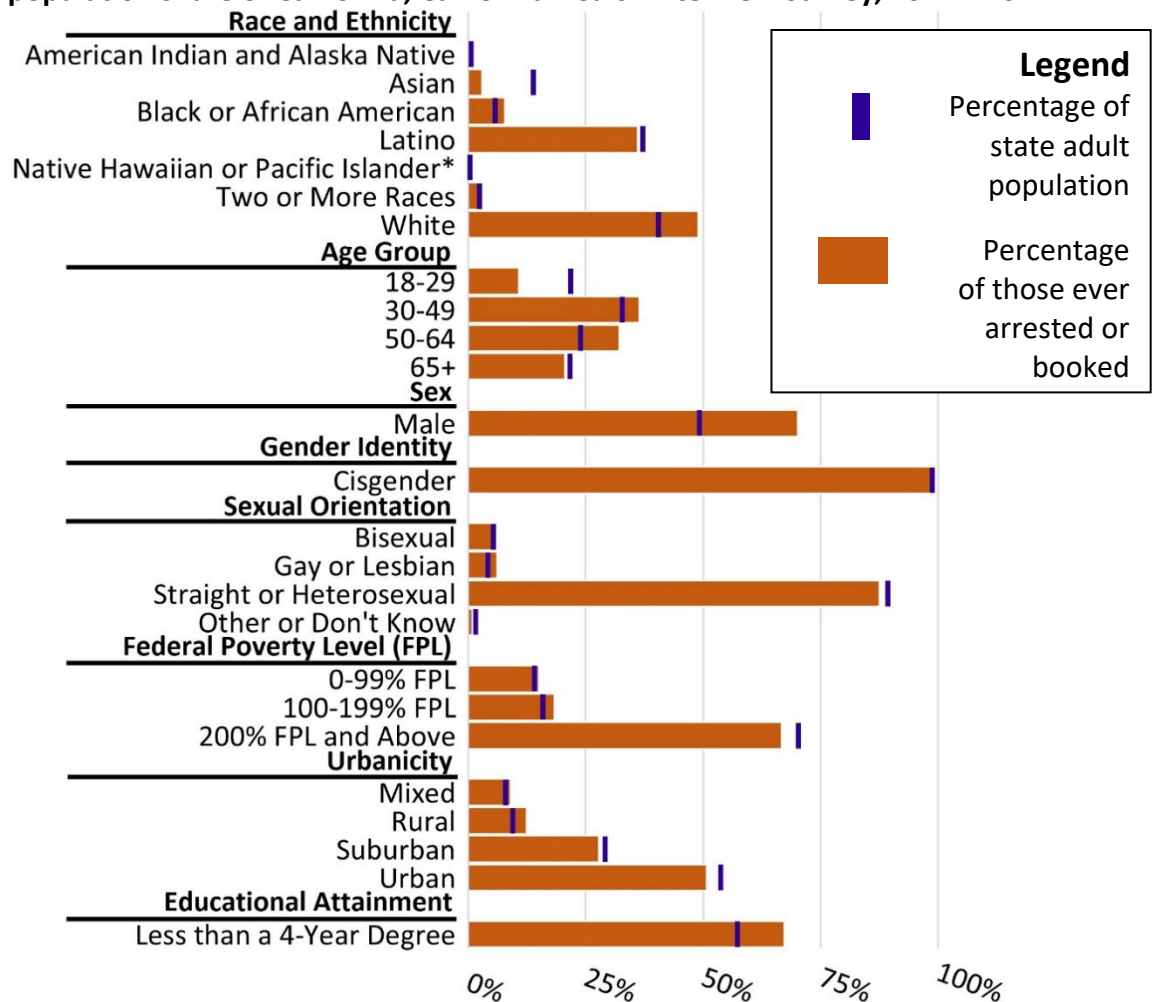
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Context

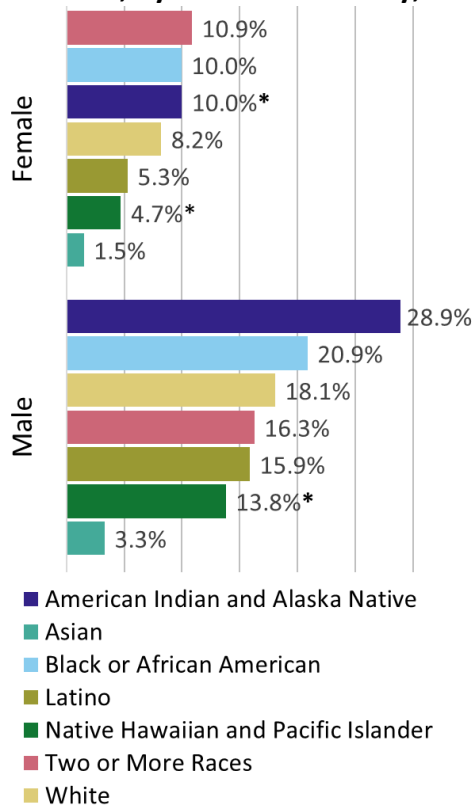
Justice involvement harms the well-being of families and communities and limits access to services and employment. [1] Justice involvement includes stops by police, arrests and bookings, sentencing and imprisonment, fatal encounters with law enforcement, probation, and parole. Incarcerated persons have higher rates of infectious and chronic diseases, disabilities, and mental health conditions than the general public. [2-4] Data shows disparities in justice involvement by race as Black and Latino persons are more likely to be stopped by police and sentenced to prison compared to White persons. [4-7] These racial inequities may be due to the fact that White adults are more likely to avoid sentencing to prison or be granted early release [8], as well as other factors such as generational differences, discriminatory laws and policies, inequitable enforcement of laws, and racial profiling. [5-11] Further, LGBTQ+ persons are at greater risk of police contact than the general public. [12, 13] This data brief investigates justice involvement, specifically arrests and bookings, among California adults.

Figure 1: Demographic characteristics of adults ever arrested or booked compared to population share of California, California Health Interview Survey, 2021 – 2022



Note: American Indian and Alaska Native population estimate is 0.5% and those ever arrested is 0.9%.
*Statistically unreliable due to small sample size, interpret with caution. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander population estimate is 0.3% and those ever arrested is 0.3%.

Figure 2: Percentage of female and male adults ever arrested or booked, by race and ethnicity, 2021 – 2022



Note: Among Females responding with Two or More Races, the three most common individual races reported were White (75.3%), American Indian and Alaska Native (51.3%), and Black (35.2%).

***Statistically unreliable due to small sample size, interpret with caution for American Indian and Alaska Native women and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women and men.**

CHIS data illuminate disparities among California adults who have been arrested and booked for breaking the law. In the most recent data with a similar survey, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health 4-year data from 2015-2018 estimated 13.5% of Californians have ever been arrested and noted disproportionality among Black or African American and White adults. [14]

In Figure 1, Californians who reported ever arrested or booked were disproportionately, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Two or More Races or White, of the 30-49 and 50-64 age groups, male sex, gay or lesbian or bisexual, under 200% of the federal poverty level, living in mixed suburban/urban areas or rural areas, and received less than a 4-year college degree.

In Figure 2, within self-reported sex and statistical reliability, the highest rates of ever arrested or booked, by race and ethnicity, were among women identifying

with “Two or More Races” (10.9%) and American Indian and Alaska Native men (20.5%).

Policy Opportunities

- Policies affecting justice involvement include investment and interventions that avert homelessness and poverty, and access to increase mental health services. [4, 15-17]
- Evaluate the use of evidence-based policies and community investment strategies across sectors that can likely reduce justice involvement, including through healthier built-environments, social services, and economic infrastructure. [12]

Methods and Limitations

- These data are based on samples and are subject to a margin of error.
- CHIS is a sample of California households and excludes persons who live in noninstitutionalized residences (e.g. long-term care facilities, prisons) or group quarters (e.g. dormitories).
- CHIS survey respondents may be reluctant to disclose prior arrests or bookings for breaking the law.
- The data shown does not account for laws and policies affecting justice involvement nor does this account for justice involvement beyond arrests and bookings, such as police stops, fatal encounters, conviction and sentencing, and parole and release.
- Emerging research has found Southeast Asian groups displaced by US-involved wars and Pacific Islanders have the highest rates of fatal police encounters within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. [18] Disaggregation and reliable comparison of Asian groups within CHIS is being explored for further analysis.

Summary

- Nearly one in nine Californian adults have experienced being arrested or booked in their lifetime.
- Disparities exist by race and ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, federal poverty level, urbanicity and education-level.
- Highest prevalence exists among women who reported Two or More Races and American Indian or Alaska Native men.

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